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DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

FEB. 1, 1923 NO. 125

FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

SIX MONTAS TO LIVE

by GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. V FEBRUARY 1, 1923 No. 125

ISSUED TWICE A MONTH

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Published by Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d St., New York.

Harry E. Wolff, President; L. F. Wilzin, Treasurer; Charles E. Nylander, Secretary.

LU. SENARENS, Editor.

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Subscription Price: Domestic, Single Copy, 10 Cents; Domestic, Yearly, $2.50; Canada, $2.75; Foreign, $3.00.

All remittances should be sent by express money order, P. O. order, check, registered letter, or draft to insure safety. We will not be responsible for money sent otherwise.

Please Read This

NO doubt all our readers enjoyed the remarkable feature story in this number, written by George Bronson-Howard. Well, we have more of his work on hand and will publish it in a short time. We also have another of Jack Bechdolt's delightful stories in preparation for the next number. All our readers know what interesting novelettes he writes, and we are sure you will be pleased with his latest effort entitled "Seals of Wax." It is written in his best vein, one of those gripping detective romances that interest and satisfy.

Our February 1st number is going to contain an assortment of short stories that will please the most exacting reader of detective fiction. There will be about half a dozen bright, snappy yarns embodying the most brilliant ideas of the very best magazine writers in the world. One will be a Valentine story by that prince of authors William Hamilton Osborne You cannot fail to enjoy it.

The serial story "The Paper Clue" will be concluded; there will be a miscellaneous collection of short subjects, and among the instructive police articles we will issue an intensely interesting paper called "The Detective System of a Great City," by H. Mills. The manner in which the secret police department is conducted is fully explained.

Never before have we ever given our friends such large quantity and good quality as you will get in the next number.

The last coupon of the Cash Prize Contest is printed on page 59 of this number. There will be no more coupons. Now get all the coupons you can scrape up and send them to us. From today onward you will have two weeks to get them to us. Two weeks are allowed so that people living at a distance will have time to get their coupons in our office before the contest closes. Now get busy gathering coupons. Get as many of each number as you can. Ask your friends to buy the magazine so you can get coupons from them. The contestants who send us the largest number of coupons will, of course, get the largest prizes. When you bundle your collection of coupons be sure to send your name, address and the number of coupons you have in your package. Shortly after the coupons are all in, the prizes will be awarded to the lucky winners.

THE EDITOR.

Six Months to Live

by George Bronson-Howard

CHAPTER ONE

MY connection with the death of Barbara Deeming did not occur until some days after it happened, outside the fact that she was found dead in the court of the old-fashioned house where I had a studio—a working studio.

But as everything I have to tell begins with the death of Barbara Deeming, I had best tell first how it occurred, or, rather, what was told about it at the time.

I was duck-shooting on Long Island myself, so I got what information I possessed (up to the time of my closer acquaintance with the other principal in the tragedy) from the newspapers and from the old Irishman, Denny Mulcahy, the "superintendent" of the building.

The most curious point about it was that no one in the building at the time her body was discovered seemed to know the girl or anything about her. Nor had any one seen her enter. Nor did any one know from what window she took her fatal dive.

Ours is one of those old-fashioned buildings near Sheridan Square—one of the oldest bachelor apartments originally, I believe —since slightly remodeled into "studios." It is a "walk-up" place, hence any one entering it at that hour of the night must have possessed a key to the front door, or else been admitted by somebody. As many of the studio folk are, like myself, simply using the place as a business office, so to speak, and not sleeping there (they are large single rooms simply), there were very few people in the building at the time the thing happened, which was about two o'clock in the morning.

At least that is the time old Denny was aroused by some noise or other and came finally into the court around which the place is built, where he found the poor girl's body. It was quite evident from her condition that she had fallen from a great height.

He immediately summoned the police and, leaving the body where it was, conducted a personal search for some tenant who would know something about her. He rang up first every one whom he knew slept in the building, asking them to dress and come down. Then he took his pass-key and went from one door to another to see if there were any uninvited guests in the other studios.

He found no one, uninvited or otherwise.

By the time those who slept there, a scant five in number—there are but twelve studios—had bundled themselves up in dressing-growns and come down the police had arrived.

None of the five knew the girl or anything about her. When by request the other tenants who could be reached by telephone arrived at the coroner's, they also failed to identify her. That accounted for every one except myself, known to be on Long Island and inaccessible, a young man named Saul Jacob, whose father reported him also absent and in the Adirondacks, where he had been for several days, and a fellow named Wilson, known to be out West.

That was all the late editions of the morning and the early ones of the afternoon newspapers reported. But later editions had more tragic news of the affair. The marks left by throttling fingers had been found on the girl's throat—black-and-blue and purplish marks—which routed the first theories of suicide. Still there was no identification of the girl.

As for her clothing, it had no labels that proved anything one way or the other; it was all pretty inexpensive and bought at the big department stores. No trace of a handbag had been found. The police were doing their best, said the newspapers, to trail her laundry-marks. And that was the last to appear in print about the "Sheridan Square Mystery" before I returned to New York.

The place where I was doing my duck-shooting was, as I have before remarked, pretty inaccessible; so I saw nothing of the newspapers until my return to town four days after Barbara Deeming's death. True, I had been located by wire and asked if I could identify a girl of that description (which followed) along with the bare facts, as first stated, which led me to infer suicide.

And I had replied in the negative along with the statement that I never used the place at night and wouldn't be likely to have callers then. Also that I had loaned no latch-keys to any one, nor given permission to any one to use my place.

There the matter rested until my return, when I was shown the papers by Denny Mulcahy, whose temporary position in the public eye had gladdened his heart, and told of the sinister suspicions of the police anent the throttling part of the story.

"And how's your cough, sir?" he asked me when the subject of the dead girl (no one knew her name then) had been exhausted temporarily. He knew I had gone off to Long Island less for ducks and more on account of a nasty cough that had been bothering me for some weeks and which I had decided needed a fresh-air cure—sleeping out of doors and keeping in the open most of the day.

He was a kindly old fellow and had been much concerned over that cough of mine, asking about it frequently and inquiring, in his sympathetic way, whether or not my lungs were weak—as his Denny's, "who'd died of them," had been—and whether or not they ran in my family.

And I'd been obliged to confess that my father had died of consumption, as so had one of my uncles. Also that my mother had been an invalid for years, although not for that reason.

So when he inquired on my return as to my cough, I was sorry to inform him that while out shooting one morning early I had been caught in a rainstorm in the Sound and, with my boatman, had a hard time pulling in against an adverse current. This had resulted in a thorough wetting, which had done my cough no good and brought me home earlier than I expected on account of fearing I had caught a bad cold.

"I'm sorry to hear that, sir," he said. "And, by the bye, there's a new docthor just moved in over the way—ye'll see his name over there—with a great reputation for lung trouble, so I'm told."

He pointed across to the ground floor of an apartment-house where gilt Gothic letters on a blackboard told of the office hours of "J. Harmsworth Harris, M.D., M.R., C.S., Throat and Lungs."

"Yes, sir, only day before yisterday, and would ye belave me, there's been a string of callers there already. He's by way of having a great reputation in the old coun-

try, they're telling me. Whyn't ye have him look ye over, sir?"

"I'll do it, Denny," I answered, without the slightest intention of doing so, however, for I would not admit the possibility of anything wrong with *my* lungs.

But when I came downstairs a few hours later there was Denny in his little "office" under the stairs, where he answered phone calls and took packages, to remind me of my promise.

"Ye'll be going over to the docthor's now, sir, and lave him give ye a rale looking over?"

"Pooh, Denny," I said, laughing. "Anybody would think you believe there was something wrong with me."

"I dunno, sir," he said with a mournful shake of his head. "'Twas the same with my poor Denny, always laughing it off like—— But, annyhow, I've promised the docthor ye'll look in on him this day, and it's meself that'll see ye go, sir, if it's the last act of me life."

He took me by an arm and guided my footsteps across the street, where he rang the doctor's bell. Nor did he relinquish his hold on my arm until he had delivered me into the hands of a woman whom I took to be a trained nurse from her white linen uniform and cap. A trio of well-groomed patients preceded me, awaiting the good offices of Dr. Harmsworth Harris.

From the pile of magazines on the brass-studded leather-covered centre-table the nurse selected an English periodical, which she handed me. I saw it was a medical journal, and was about to put it back when my eye caught the name of Doctor Harris on the contents page, which was also its cover.

It appeared there was an article within on "The Famous White Plague Fighter, Harmsworth Harris," as he was named there. When I concluded the reading of that article I was, first, thankful that Denny had brought me to so good a man; second, slightly uneasy lest his verdict be unfavorable, for no one could read that article through and be in any doubt about this physician's infallibility—vouched for as he was by England's leading medical journal, *The Lancet*. Even so distinguished a patient as one of the king's own brothers pinned his faith to him.

It was a long article, ending with the deepest regrets on the part of the medical fraternity that the doctor's marriage to the beautiful American girl, Miss Elliott, would take him overseas, perhaps permanently.

When I had concluded the reading of it I saw to my surprise that the waiting-room was empty. Evidently the doctor was a swift worker as well as an accurate one! A moment or so later I heard the last patient being escorted into the hall from the inner office and saw the nurse return to escort me in.

CHAPTER TWO

I REMEMBER nothing of where I went or what I did during the hour after I left J. Harmsworth Harris, M.D., M.R.C.S.; left him with my death sentence ringing in my ears.

"You want the truth, the cruel, naked truth? You have six months to live, at the most. If you had come to me before—or any skilled specialist. Nothing can be done now. There is no consultation fee where I do not undertake a case."

Six months to live, at the most!

I remember stumbling out through an office that had filled up with patients once more, although the nurse tried to guide me through the hall. After that—well, sheer blind instinct must have carried me on and on, following the course of my daily constitutional.

Yet I did not recognize a single one of the familiar landmarks; did not realize, until a swart squat man accosted me and I came out of my daze with a start, that I was once more in the vicinity of Sheridan Square.

Nor did I hear what the swart squat man said until he had repeated himself several times.

"You are the gentleman I saw at Dr. J. Harmsworth Harris's this afternoon?"

I sheered off from him with a look of

hatred. Just then one of the carbon candles in a great glass globe high overhead began to sizzle and spark, reminding me that the afternoon had passed into dusk, which was merging into darkness. So it must have been hours since I quitted the doctor's place.

That same sputtering purplish light revealed the silk hat and Persian-lamb collared overcoat the swart squat man wore.

"What do you want?" I demanded roughly. "Say what you have to say and be quick about it."

The swart squat man seemed to take no offence at my rudeness. He drew out a gold-trimmed suede case and proffered me a business card that identified him as "S. Jacopo, Importer of Olive Oil, etc.," with an office somewhere on or near by Christopher street.

"Well?" I continued to demand. "What do you want, Mr.—er—Jacopo?"

A curious shadow crossed his heavy Italianate face.

"It is not what I want, but what you want, my dear sir. I will be frank with you. I sat outside in Doctor Harris's office and heard him pronounce sentence of death upon you. Fortunately for you, I am perhaps the only man in New York willing and able to pay a top-notch price for those six months. So I gave up the purpose for which I had come to the doctor and followed you, not knowing how long it would take for the first acute pain of your shock to wear off. Now that you are yourself again, I can speak."

"Do it then, and get it over with. My God, man, can't you see I want to be let alone?"

Jacopo bowed. "It is always best to be brusque with strangers until they have established some claim on our attention. My claim will be established or not, after asking you a single question."

"Ask it, then."

"It is this. You have six months to live at most. Perhaps only five, or four, or three. Perhaps not that. Now here is the question. Do you love any one sufficiently —some one who is dependent upon your life and work—to sell me those months if I will pay you enough to make that person comfortable for the remainder of his or her life?"

As my mind had been upon my lack of sufficient property or money or insurance to provide an income after my death for the one person I loved well enough to do *anything* for, his question certainly justified his claim on my attention.

"My mother is an old lady, an invalid, and has no other support than what I send her. And as I have only a few thousands over and above what I earn each week, I think I've answered your question, Mr. Jacopo. What right had you to ask it?" I demanded.

"You may *think* you have. But *have* you? Shall I understand you *are* willing to sell those few months? You *are!* That being the case, I will buy those months from you, cash down. Or in case there is more than one dependent, perhaps annuities would be better."

"There is only one," I interrupted fiercely.

"Very good, then. Now, what price shall we agree upon?" Then he looked at me a little uncertainly. "You are sure you care enough about this person to overcome certain preliminary qualms of cowardice?"

I cut him short with an unpleasant laugh. "I don't like that word 'cowardice,' to begin with," I said deliberately. "And in the second place, as you suggested this bargain, suppose you do what *you* promise. I think you'll find no fault with what I'm willing to do."

"That being the case," said he, "I think we had better continue this conversation indoors, where we are not apt to be overheard."

He started up the steps of the building before which we had been standing in the gathering gloom. In the excitement of the strange proposal he was making me I had momentarily lost my sense of place. Then I realized that this was the very studio building in which I was a tenant.

"You wish to go to my place?" I asked.

We had entered the hallway. He paused under the light of a stained-glass lantern, his swart face all surprise.

"You live here, too?"

"I do not live here, but I have a studio."

His eyes glittered. "How magnificently lucky! What a remarkable coincidence," he muttered.

"What do you mean?"

"You will soon know," he returned, and led the way upstairs.

CHAPTER THREE

AS I read over what I have written I sense the fact that the scene between us must have, for you who were not there, a certain fantastic quality. And, as I have no words in which to convey to you the convincing quality of the man's speech and manner, I can only give you his exact words and mine; it must stand, whether it seems fantastic or no.

I followed him upstairs, past each newel-posted landing, under each stained-glass lantern, past my own place, clean to the top floor, where he paused before the biggest studio of the lot, the one that took up the entire attic story.

On the door, painted in old English black-letter, was the name "Saul Jacob."

Then I remembered the name on the card he had given me: "S. Jacopo," which, translated into English, would be "S. Jacob."

"It is your place, then?"

He shook his head. Then the newspaper accounts of the girl's death recurred to me. When they spoke of my own absence they spoke also of that of "another young man named Saul Jacob, whose father gave it out that he, too, had been absent from the city for several days." This, then, would be the father.

S. Jacopo opened the door with one of a bunch of keys; with a flourish of his shabby flat-brimmed silk hat he bade me enter. I found myself in a place most sumptuously furnished in Oriental style: rich crimson hangings shot with gold thread, gorgeous lacquer cabinets of such reds as come only from China, with lattice-work at the windows to match them, and, overhead, lanterns of Moorish filigree and of the red of a pasha's fez.

He bade me be seated on a divan, over which was thrown a silken rug from Samarcand, while he, himself, disappeared through the crimson hangings into an adjacent room. I heard his voice in a whisper; the one he addressed whispered lower still.

Then he returned, carrying with him a packet of yellow-backed treasury notes. These he laid down on the tabouret nearest me. I thought at first that I had lost my reason when I saw *that the one on top was a thousand-dollar bill!*

"There are fifty of them there," he said quietly, following my glance. "I think that is enough to buy security for him you love, is it not?"

"For her," I replied, my tone low. "Yes."

"Now tell me," he went on, "just what you were doing on the night of the 25th."

"I was on Long Island," I returned, "at a fishing and hunting 'box' that I hired for the week."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

He rubbed his hands. "Better and better. Now, your name——"

I gave it. Then I heard a typewriter begin to click rapidly behind the red curtains.

"Catholic or Protestant?"

I told him. The typewriter's clicking continued.

"Just what were you doing on Long Island? Then no one was with you from early in the afternoon or late in the morning until after dawn the following morning? No one saw you during that time?"

"Not to my knowledge."

He rubbed his hands again. "This is famous," he chuckled. And all the while the typewriter's clicking went on and on. "Then, if you had a motor-car hidden, you might have come up to New York and gone back again and no one been the wiser. You say you were remote from railroad stations and the like? Good, good!"

He reached up and turned on the light within a Chinese lantern of wrought bronze and oiled silk, painted cunningly with Imperial dragons, one that might have hung in some old temple. Then he thrust the packet

of thousand-dollar treasury notes in front of me, counting them at the same time very slowly.

The typewriter ceased to click. He crossed to the crimson curtains and behind them, re-emerging with sheets of letter paper typed.

"Is it enough?" he asked.

"Ample. What am I to do in exchange for it?"

"Sign this and take the consequences of signing it."

I concentrated on the typewritten sheets under the mellow light of the old Temple lantern. The first one bore the name and number of these studios heavily embossed in black-letter. This had been X-ed out by the typist and "62 Eagle Alley" written in; following it certain explicit instructions of how to reach that place.

The astounding letter read as follows:

FATHER IGNATIUS LOYOLA HANRAHAN,
Ste. Genevieve's.

HOLY FATHER: You must come to me at once at the above address, that I may receive the last sacrament. Otherwise my murderous hand may be turned against myself and my soul go shrieking down to hell.

I'm half mad to-night, and unless you hurry it will be too late.

Do not think you have to do with some escaped patient from an insane asylum. I wish it were no worse than that. I am the man who killed Barbara Deeming, the girl whose body was found thrown from the top story at 112 St. John street, about which the papers have written as the "Sheridan Square Mystery."

When I have confessed to you I shall probably have the courage to give myself up. Otherwise I shall kill myself. I therefore call upon you as the nearest father-confessor to save my guilty soul.

Do not imagine that the police suspect me. They do not. I have behaved with the cunning of a fiend, establishing a Long Island alibi, and coming to and returning from the city between night and morning. But now that my madness has passed my guilt weighs on me.

Come to me at once at 62 Eagle Alley.

When I had finished I looked up in a frozen sort of way, unable to speak or to move. S. Jacopo crossed to a cellaret, poured out a stiff brandy, and motioned me to drink it. The fiery liquid released me from the frozen fear.

"What does this mean?" I demanded of him.

"It means that, unless you sign it, my innocent son may have to suffer the death penalty," returned S. Jacopo, his swart, hairy face upthrust at me. "And you must die anyhow in six months or less. The public executioner will never get *you*. I will see to it that you are defended to the limit, your case deferred, appealed, whatever is necessary, until a natural death claims you. I will see that jurors are challenged, that everything is done that can be done. You will be dead long before the law can touch you. And what will you lose in prison except your liberty? You shall have every luxury—your food from the best restaurants, books—everything you wish."

The beads of sweat on his swart forehead were as big as pinheads. Two of them joined and went streaking their way down between his hairy eyebrows.

"Sign it, and have done, for God's sake," he whispered, hoarse and tense. "Do you think fifty-thousand-dollar jobs grow on every rosebush. Over two thousand dollars for every week of the entire six months, if it lasts that long. As for my son——"

After a great gulp that seemed to hold his Adam's apple paralyzed and me, horribly fascinated, watching it, for God knows how long, S. Jacopo began to bind himself with the most terrible soul-searing oaths as to the absolute innocence of his son, Saul Jacob.

To such a one as me, of a religion that teaches one to believe that such oaths drag the sinner shrieking to the pit, if false, the sight and sound of this was most fearfully convincing. There was a terrible sincerity about the swart squat man.

"He is suspected. There is circumstantial evidence against him," he went on, his face distorted with rage and fear. "After

the finger-marks on the girl's throat were discovered and inquiries began, news came from the Middle West, where some actress friend of the girl was playing. Barbara Deeming had seen her off on the night she came here to visit my son. She had told this actress that she was in love with Saul and that she was going to pay him a visit that night and prevent him from marrying Ada Crothers."

S. Jacopo spread his hands and buried his face in them. After a moment he continued:

"This Barbara Deeming was madly in love with Saul. I do not know the rights or wrongs of that. But, whatever they were, Saul was through with her. She represented his wild oats. Now he meant to marry Miss Crothers, settle down, and take the weight of the business off his poor father's shoulders. But this Deeming girl would not have it that way. She had packed her things, left her apartment hotel, and come to drag Saul away from the city and the girl he meant to marry. She had left her baggage at the station, checked, and the checks were in her handbag that dropped from her hand before she flung herself from Saul's window.

"That her having left the hotel and the fact of her handbag not having been found, was why the police were not able to identify her and why no one wondered about her return home."

"But—but the marks on her throat," I forced myself to ask.

"Saul refused to go with her. The woman was desperately in love. She threatened to throw herself from the window unless he consented. He grappled with her."

S. Jacopo lifted a haggard face and tortured eyes.

"The finger-marks on her throat *are* his! It was by the throat that he seized her when she hurled herself backward. Yes, and held on so tightly that it made those terrible marks. It was not until she matched her dead weight against the strength of his hands that he was forced to let go or else fall through the window with her.

"I ask you: What *could* he do unless he wished to be dashed to destruction? I ask you! And so an innocent boy has all the earmarks of one who is guilty. That is why I have sworn he was out of town at the time; that is why I have kept him hidden. And then to-day, when I heard the doctor pronounce sentence on you, I saw my chance to save him.

"There is no other way. Who will believe him? No, either he must die or be shut away for life in some prison, which is worse than death. And all because he wanted to marry the girl he loved. It is unfair, unrighteous. And you, who must die anyhow, are the only one who can save him, and by saving him ensure the comfort of her whom you love, who otherwise must be left to suffer, as I shall suffer. Think of it: you save a father's sufferings as well as a mother's and an innocent boy's life. And you lose—nothing!"

"Except my liberty."

"For a few months. Isn't it worth it?"

"And my good name."

"How would it profit you during the short time you have to live?"

I was weakening. That money, which he kept always before my eyes, coupled with the picture of my invalid mother left a pauper, was breaking down my defenses.

"But this actress friend? If she said this girl was coming to visit your son, what of that?"

"I have thought it all out. You were her deceived lover who set a trap to catch her. While you were here in this place Barbara Deeming feared to visit Saul. So you made it seem you had left for Long Island, but returned and awaited for her. When she came to the building you were watching for her. A window just below Saul's is on the stair landing opposite your studio. Here you meet her, stifle her cries, hurl her out, and escape to your motor-car and make the run back to Long Island. I have worked it all out in detail and will communicate it to you as we go to Eagle Alley. Oh, it is simple enough, if you will only sign."

Perhaps it was his former comparison of himself as a bereaved father, with her whom I loved, sorrowing for *her* son—that and the undoubted pathos of the drooping head and faltering syllables—that finally turned

me. His love for the fellow gave his words a sincerity no fiction could have.

In the silence that fell I signed the letter.

"You have signed; you have signed?"

With a queer muffled scream of joy he scrabbled together the thousand-dollar notes that he had spread out while he was talking and pushed them toward me. Then he seized the paper I had signed, bringing it close to his face, gloating over the signature.

Then he seized the telephone and asked for a number that I recognized as police headquarters. Connected, he asked for the detective bureau.

"Here's a tip; never mind who it's from. It won't do you any good to look up the call, as I'm using another man's telephone. Send some men to Ste. Genevieve's Rectory and have them wait for a messenger boy. The man whom I believe murdered that girl on St. John street is sending a message to Father Hanrahan. Get it, and I think you'll get your man. Hurry or you'll miss the boy. Good-by." He disconnected hurriedly.

I stopped him. My hand was trembling as I laid it on his arm.

"Wait! I've got to get this money in the All-Night Bank. I don't want it to be found on me."

"Yes, yes," he agreed. "Very well, it doesn't hurt to have them anxious. They'll be waiting. Esme! Esme!"

The curtains parted and a girl appeared from the next room, a girl with simply waved fair hair, gentian blue eyes and cheeks like rose-blooms. In this room she seemed some clean and hardy Northern growth oppressed in an exotic atmosphere.

"He has signed, Esme. An envelope now for him to address in his own handwriting. He will give you the key to his studio, and you will deliver the message to the boy when he arrives. Keep the place dark and hand the boy the message in the dark, so that he will not see you are a girl. Glove your hand with one of his gloves. Good! Good!"

The girl's face was expressionless. I addressed the envelope as directed and arose, giving her a curious glance, wondering just what she had to do with this affair. I remember I thought at the time that this was probably the girl whom S. Jacopo's son was to marry. I had forgotten the other's name was not Esme.

And I remember also that I thought if this *was* the girl, I did not blame Saul Jacob for refusing to give her up whether another woman threatened suicide or not.

A few more exchanges of words, some whispers between the girl and the man, the transference of my key and getting into coats and hats, and we were on our way.

First to the All-Night Bank, then to the Tombs! A pang of regret took me as I said good-night to the girl. But for my death sentence such a girl might have been mine, I thought.

Well, at all events, the only woman I had ever loved, really and truly *loved,* was safe from want now; anyhow, let death come when it willed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FEW people, New Yorkers, born or raised not excepted, know the mazes of old New York from Canal street, say, north to the Square, between the great business section to the south to where Fifth avenue begins and the new Seventh avenue cut—especially on the West Side where the great new boulevard has only cleared a few of the West Side rookeries away.

In the mazes below Bleecker street, where main streets are narrower than by-ways uptown and side streets were like ancient country lanes for crookedness and darkness and narrowness, we left the cab, turned up our coat collars, and pulled our hats low on our foreheads; S. Jacopo had changed his topper for a soft one of his son's.

He now steered me rapidly through a street of evil appearance, as dark as sin, turning out of it into one even darker, lighted by a single flickering gaslight in its middle—a street of abandoned two-story houses condemned by the city; houses with every window smashed, with doors hanging by half a hinge or fallen completely; the most

forlorn-looking houses in the crookedest narrow street I had ever seen. The light from the dim gas flare showed a sign underneath: "Melody Lane."

I changed my mind about its superlative ill qualities when we suddenly debouched into an alleyway that held no light at all. S. Jacopo gripped my arm as my foot slipped in its filth, whispering sibilantly:

"Eagle Alley. Walk carefully."

These were the last words I ever heard him utter. Nor did I ever look on his face again. I heard him gasp, saw that some shapeless object had been thrown about his head and that a pair of hands were dragging him backward. I struck at them.

Suddenly I, too, was gripped from behind and dragged forward, then released. An electric flash in the gloom revealed the girl Esme I had seen in Saul Jacob's studio.

"That's all, Williams," she instructed my invisible assailant. "Now, Mr. Conyears," she addressed me, "you had better come along and see what you were letting yourself in for. But quietly, *quietly!* The game isn't over yet. You must trust me."

She caught my arm. "Saul has two automatic pistols. He told his father that if the police ever came after him he'd take half a dozen of them with him to hell, to help carry his grip, as he put it. And he shan't take any more lives. He shan't, he shan't! That's why I want you to come with me just as if you meant to carry out your bargain."

"You mean you don't intend I shall?" I gasped.

"Yes. Saul is guilty. It was a trap. But you will see for yourself. He will convict himself out of his own mouth. I mean him to. And you will save some lives if you go up there just as you meant to. Otherwise he'll shoot at sight. But not at you. He's expecting you, his saviour. So go first."

All the while she had been guiding me through the shadows of the slippery, smelly alley. Now she opened the door of what looked like a stable—opened it with one of a bunch of keys I had seen handed her a moment before—doubtless those taken from S. Jacopo. I entered.

I will not deny that I did so with many mental reservations. I had no idea just what was going to happen. But I was past the stage where I could be afraid. I had come here with the idea of surrendering myself to the police, with the knowledge that my death was inevitable, anyhow. So I cannot say that I had any particular qualms of fear.

"Stamp your feet," she directed low. "Then give three knocks with your cane, then one; then two. That's his father's knock. Now, go ahead up those stairs."

As I started to stumble up the dark-boxed stairway strewn with oats and hay a door above opened and the ray of a powerful electric torch dazzled me into temporary blindness, but I called out:

"It's Conyears. From your father."

"Oh, you? Yes, come on up!"

I staggered up the remaining steps and into a room at the top whose furniture consisted entirely of an old kitchen table, a dozen chairs, a straw pallet in one corner, and some old harness hanging on the crossbeams overhead. A candle in a beer bottle on the table gave the only light now that the electric torch was shut off.

I did not gather all these details at once. The light was too dim and my eyes were still suffering from shock, so that I could not make out the features of the fellow who had greeted me and whose voice sounded none too pleasant when he addressed my companion.

"You, huh?" He seemed uneasy.

"Yes, me!" There was no love lost between them, that was sure. "Oh, I didn't want to come. But your father thought he might be followed, or something, so he made me. He's told me everything. I even wrote the confession for Mr. Conyears here to sign. I——"

"Ssh!" he interrupted. "Not so loud. Has it gone off?"

She nodded and sat down. He came nearer the circle of illumination cast by the candle, and I sized him up. He was of the type silly women are apt to call "virile," the "cave-man" type. To me he was singularly unbeautiful; a sullen, lowering face he had with meaty-looking hands and thick, blubbery lips. His heavy Oriental-looking eyes

were thickly eyelashed and blackly eyebrowed, and his crop of curly hair had a greasy look to me.

He was dressed in soiled rumpled clothes of an expensive exaggerated Broadway type, and his crimson-striped silk shirt and collar had been worn for some days.

He reached for his overcoat and fawn-colored Fedora hat.

"Well, if everything's all settled, we'd better hurry off, hadn't we?" he asked nervously. "Police liable to be here any minute, aren't they?"

"No. Guardian didn't mean to ring for the messenger until half an hour after we left. Didn't want to take any chances for fear we might have trouble finding our way. And that reminds me of what he told me to tell you."

She tapped his forearm nearest her.

"If Mr. Conyears is to look as desperate as that confession makes him out to be he'd better have a weapon, hadn't he? And you'd better get rid of any you have, too. Guardian was particular to tell me that. Remember ,you are still under suspicion, and if they 'pick you up' (as he said) with a weapon on you, you are liable to be held under that Sullivan law and—well, it's most unwise, he said."

Her cold, calm, indifferent delivery seemed to impress him. He whisked a pair of pistols, one from under each armpit, and laid them on the table.

"Better take off those shoulder holsters, too, if you have them," she warned. He followed her instructions, tossing them on the table. He picked up both and ordered me to strap them on.

"Take off your coat and hat, too. Look at home. Are these things loaded, Saul?"

He nodded. She handed one to me. "Both loaded?" she inquired, taking up the other.

"Yes," he answered very impatiently. "Why——"

His tongue had changed to one of angry disbelief. She had risen and was threatening him with the one she held.

"Put up your hands, Saul! Up with them. Keep your gun on him, too, Mr. Conyears, and shoot him down like the murderer he is. Don't have any mercy on him. He had none on you. You aren't any more sick than I am. That 'six months to live' was all apart of his plan. That man wasn't a doctor who told you. He was one of Saul's crooked friends, and the nurse and the other patients were all hired to convince *you*. Don't move, Saul!"

"You damned little——"

"Be careful. Now, Mr. Conyears, it happened like this: When Saul here read the papers the next morning and saw where that old Irishman said you went to the country on account of your cough, he had his father talk to the Irishman and found out your father and uncle had died of consumption, and then he, Saul here, persuaded your father to pay the fake 'doctor' to fit that office up in a hurry before you returned. Several times since his father had managed to get in touch with that same Irishman and tell him what a marvelous doctor that 'Harmsworth Harris' is. And the *real* Harris is a wonderful doctor.

"To-day they were watching for your return. His father paid the old Irishman—gave him a tip, that is—to see you went to the doctor's; said he was interested in getting prominent young men in this neighborhood to patronize him. You know the rest. Fake, fake, fake from start to finish."

"You mean I—haven't anything wrong with me?" I demanded breathlessly. "And that this fellow planned to have me practically commit suicide?"

She nodded. I turned to him with a snarl. But he had turned on the girl with a foul oath and was about to rush her, when I struck him heavily on the shoulder with my extended gun, concentrating into the blow all my accumulated hatred for one who had made me step to the very verge of hell.

He cursed me foully and nursed his shoulder. The girl's voice broke in again, cold, indifferent:

"Be careful what you're doing, Saul, or I'll shoot. And if I do the shot will be heard, and the police will probably get you. They'll be here any time now. You've still got time to make a run for it. I'll let you go for Guardian's sake. But I wasn't going to see an innocent man suffer on *your* ac-

count. They'll probably get you, anyway, sooner or later. That actress friend of Barbara told them about her coming to your——"

"Damn her and damn you!" he almost yelled. "And damn Barbara!"

"I wouldn't say that. You've had enough revenge on her, God knows. You can't convince anybody but your father you didn't kill her. That story about her suicide won't get you very far when they find out who she was—your wife."

"My wife! Why——"

"Don't bother to lie. Barbara herself came to the house to see your father and tell him, and I was there and saw her instead and begged her to keep it quiet for Guardian's sake. That was only a day before the murder and I was wondering what to do when—it—happened. I know, as the police will soon know or realize, that she came to see you that night to threaten you with exposure if——"

"Well, I fixed the devil so she won't do any more exposing," he burst out, white-hot with rage. "I fixed her, and fixed her good, didn't I? And I'll fix you."

The girl spoke in sudden triumph: "Come in now, gentlemen. He's confessed. You heard him, didn't you? Don't move, Saul, or we both fire."

As she spoke, backing away from him, the door opened and three plain-clothesmen, who had been listening outside, hurled themselves on him. They were followed at a discreet distance by one who, I learned later, was a deputy commissioner and a friend of this girl's, Esme, who had been acting all the while under his orders.

"We have a great deal to thank you for, Miss Warrener," he said, as the handcuffs clicked on Saul Jacob's wrists.

"Thank me for nothing," she answered wearily as she dropped into the chair and laid the automatic on the table. She seemed on the point of collapse, but she controlled herself as she looked across at the raging prisoner as he stood held by two of the detectives.

"Revenge is an ugly thing," she added, "and I would not have done what I did, perhaps, if he had not tried to get an innocent man to suffer in his place. And I rely on you to do nothing to his father, guilty of conspiracy or not. S. Jacopo was my guardian," she explained, turning to me, "my father's partner. I have been in his house for ten years. During that time this cowardly wretch over there made my childish life a thing of misery and terror, tormenting me with fiendish ingenuity. As I grew older he sullied my girlish thoughts with a tongue that made the world seem a lazar-house. Yes, and told foul tales to his father when I wouldn't suffer his caresses.

"Worse, in a worldly way, when my father put my little fortune in his hands for investment this Saul Jacob wasted it in his debaucheries and then lied, saying that I had insisted on foolish wild-cat investments that had failed. But the end to my patience came, guardian or no guardian, when, after murdering the girl he married five years ago (married her because he could get her no other way), he tried to get an innocent man to swear his life away, depending on that man's most sacred instinct, his love for his mother. And all so that he might marry and ill-use another girl. Well, I am even with you at last, Saul. You have nothing to thank me for, Mr. Commissioner. It is I who have you to thank for helping to bring justice on such a creature. Another thing, Saul."

He turned the wickedest glance on her I have ever seen.

"There was no actress friend. It was I who furnished that information. And it was that night you killed her that Barbara Deeming came to see your father; it was not the day before, as I told you a few moments ago. And I, myself, drove her to your studio, thinking—God forgive me—that if she threatened you with exposure you would not allow your engagement to Ada Crothers to be announced. So you see you owe this entirely to me."

"Damn her, damn you, damn you all!" Saul Jacob frothed. "She lied to me then, lied when she said no one knew she had come there. Otherwise would I have been fool enough to do what I did? Every one lied. Even my own damned father——"

"Take him away, please," breathed Esme Warrener.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN we were in a cab that had been summoned for her by one of the detectives the girl handed me the envelope containing my confession.

"Tear it up," she said dully. "You fell into their trap like a lamb, didn't you?"

I shuddered. If it had not been for this girl I would have died in the electric chair without even knowing that I would not have died anyhow.

"But—but—how did they know about—my mother?"

"Have you never heard of private detectives?" she answered in the same weary tone she used in the loft. "You were looked up from 'A' to 'Izzard.' And this afternoon you were followed when you left the 'doctor's' and my guardian telephoned for just in time to meet you as you neared the building. He is the only person I am sorry for. It is true he meant to sacrifice you, but he believed in the innocence of his son, and, brute though the fellow was, believed and trusted in him.

"I can't help having some affection for old S. Jacopo," she went on, "even though he did let his son waste my little fortune and believe his lies. That was why I stopped you a few moments ago when you started to speak of returning that fifty thousand dollars. I want you to keep it for me until I can prove to you it is rightfully mine. I have no chance of ever getting a penny of what Saul lost from his father, not now."

"But I must give it back."

"You must," she assured me promptly. "You must give it back to *me*. Saul stole nearly twice that much from me. But there's no hurry. I can't explain any more to-night. Keep it in your name and come to see me to-morrow, and I will prove to you how I was defrauded. Keep it until then."

"But I don't want it!" I stammered.

"*I* do," she returned. "And it's my only chance of getting it. I sacrificed what chance I had to save you. Won't you do that much for me—just keep it?"

Her pleading tone was irresistible.

"And come and let me convince you?"

Before she left me I had promised both things.

I might remark, in closing this tale of my connection with the murder of Barbara Deeming, that the money continued to remain in my name. For after the first few visits when she convinced me I continued them for more personal reasons, and—well, she convinced me of another fact of which she had not started to convince me.

Which was that it was not good for man to live alone. So the money still lies to the credit of Mr. (and Mrs.) Michael Conyears.

MIRROR PHOTOGRAPHS THE DEAD

A LOUISIANA girl died. The body was placed in front of a mirror and a large bouquet was clasped in the hands. A month ago one of the family noticed what appeared to be the likeness of the dead sister etched on the surface of the mirror, says *Cooper's Weekly*.

The likeness grew until the body of the girl with the bouquet clasped in her hands was clearly visible. The picture resembles an old-fashioned daguerreotype. It is due of course to the action of sunlight reflected on the silvered surface of the looking-glass.

It may be photographic, but the chances are the "picture" is a coincidence. The other day a boy threw a stone through the window. The result was a ragged hole in the broken pane which every one recognized as a silhouette of the Goddess of Liberty as she appears on United States coins. Almost every detail was exact. It was just a happen so. No special design in it.

Jethro's Last Spree

~by~

Beatrice S. Luisi

AT two o'clock one bitterly cold morning in February, Godfrey Long, investigator, was awakened by the insistent ringing of his telephone. Very reluctantly, for he knew that a call at such a time meant in all probability that he would have to dress and go out, he took the receiver off the hook and growled out the word: "Hello."

"Oh, I'm so glad to get you at last," said a feminine voice with a hysterical note in it; "I was afraid you might be out."

Long recognized the voice instantly as that of Mrs. Jethro Phillips, wife of an old acquaintance of his.

"What's the trouble, Mrs. Phillips?" he asked.

"It's about Jethro. I'm so worried about him. He hasn't been home in five days."

"But, my dear Mrs. Phillips," Long said, greatly annoyed, "that is nothing unusual. He has done the same thing many times before, and you know he always turns up all right."

"Yes, I know, but this time I feel as if something dreadful were going to happen. Oh, what shall I do?"

"You're nervous and unstrung," Long said, trying to comfort her. "There's nothing you can do except wait until he returns. You'll find that he will be back soon."

"I can't stand this suspense any longer. Won't you please look for him?"

Long sighed resignedly. "Very well, if you wish it I will, but I assure you there is no need to alarm yourself, Mrs. Phillips. Go to bed and try to get some sleep or you'll be ill."

"Oh, it is such a relief for me to know that you'll look for him. I feel sure you'll find him."

"Don't worry. I'll find him."

"Thank you so much. Good-by."

Long hung up the receiver and went back to bed. No need to think about Jethro Phillips until morning. The trail he left was generally a lurid one, which any one with half an ounce of brains could follow. Long anticipated no difficulty.

Jethro was the ne'er-do-well son of a wealthy father and mother who had spoiled him, and Long sometimes wondered how an intelligent woman like Jethro's wife could put up with him and his many escapades. But then Jethro always seemed to have a fatal fascination for the fair sex, and even men found it hard to resist his charm of manner. He was a "jolly good fellow" in the generally accepted sense of the term.

In the morning Long started out to find Jethro Phillips. As he had expected, he had not been seen at his club in about a week, but a clerk in a certain large hotel informed him that "Mr. Phillips had become intoxicated in the dining-room one night about five or six days ago, and the head waiter and an attendant had helped him to a room. The lady who had been with him had left alone, and next morning Mr. Phillips had paid his bill and gone away in a taxi."

Upon inquiring of the carriage attendant Long learned that Jethro, who was well known to that worthy on account of his bounteous tips, had told the taxi chauffeur to drive to a semi-private hotel on West Eightieth street.

Godfrey sighed in disgust as he started out for the hotel on West Eightieth street. It was to be the usual thing, he thought. Jethro would go from one hotel to another, getting more intoxicated in each one and sinking lower and lower in the scale until he landed in some disreputable house with his money all gone, and there he would sober up, and from there come home to his wife with promises of reformation. It had happened many times before, and Long was annoyed at himself for wasting good time in hunting for him, and annoyed at Jethro's wife for bothering her head about what happened to him.

At the hotel on West Eightieth street Long ascertained that Jethro had spent three nights there in company with a young actress, and had left alone to go to a third-class hotel of decidedly questionable character on Fourteenth street.

Long went to the hotel, fully expecting to find Jethro sobering up there, but a surprise awaited him. Although the clerk knew Jethro Phillips, since he had registered there more than once, he assured Long that Jethro had not been at the hotel in over a month, and showed the hotel register to back up his words. Long had no reason to doubt the man's statements, but made inquiries of every attendant in the place. They all agreed with the clerk that Jethro had not been there in over a month.

Rather surprised at the sudden unexpected turn, Long went back to the hotel on West Eightieth street, and through the doorman located the chauffeur of the taxi that Jethro had started out in when he left there.

At first the taxi driver could not recall having taken any one of Jethro's description anywhere, but finally he exclaimed: "Oh, sure, I remember him now. He sure was the drunkest fare I ever had. Didn't seem to know where he was goin'. When we started out he told me to drive to the —— Hotel on East Fourteenth street, and we hadn't gone more than half-way when he stuck his head out the window and yelled to me to just drive along on down Fifth avenue. I turned into Fifth avenue and kept on drivin' until we got to Washington Square, and then I asked him where he wanted me to go. He said, 'Go to h—— if you like,' but he was drunk, so I just said, 'Go there yourself.' Then he got out of the taxi and paid me. Give me a good tip, too. Then he started walkin' across the Square, and that's the last I saw of him."

No amount of questioning could elicit more from the chauffeur, so Long handed him a dollar and left.

Long had not the slightest doubt that Jethro would return in a few days, but the sudden way in which he had lost track of the scapegrace nettled him, and he determined to get trace of him again. On the way home he bought a paper and settled himself comfortably to read it. Suddenly a headline stared at him:

"Crime in Washington Square.
"Unknown Murderer Escapes After Killing Victim in Fight."

There followed an account of the killing of an Italian laborer in the doorway of a house in Washington Square. There was nothing unusual about such a murder, but what startled Long was the description of the supposed murderer. If ever there was a word picture of a man the description of the murderer was a word picture of Jethro Phillips. Mention was made even of the fancy white vest with small blue polka-dots, which Mrs. Phillips had described to Long,

The reporter went on to state that the murderer was believed to be a well-known society man, who had probably gone slumming, and being drunk had got into a fight with the Italian and brutally killed him.

Instead of going directly home, as he had at first intended, Long left the car at the next stop and took a taxi to Jethro Phillips's home. He felt certain that Mrs. Phillips had already read the article in the newspaper, for she had been examining the papers carefully ever since Jethro had disappeared.

As he had expected, Long found Mrs. Phillips in a half-hysterical condition as a result of having read the account. He comforted her as best he could, saying that there were many men in New York City to whom the description could apply.

"But it even mentioned the vest with the blue dots," she protested.

"There are hundreds of fancy vests with blue dots," Long assured her, but his tone lacked conviction. In the minds of both of them was the memory of Jethro's temper when aroused, and they both knew that toward the end of one of his periodic sprees Jethro was utterly irresponsible.

"Oh, why doesn't he come home?" sobbed Mrs. Phillips. "If he would only come home we could find out the truth whether he has done this thing or not."

As if in answer to her plea there was the sound of a motor stopping outside, and a little later a key rattled in the lock.

"Jethro!" cried Mrs. Phillips, and started up with a cry of mingled relief and dismay as Jethro Phillips himself stood in the doorway.

"Good Lord, man, what have you done to yourself?" Long exclaimed, for Jethro's face was ghastly and he seemed to be controlling himself with an effort.

Without a word Jethro motioned them to follow him, and led the way upstairs to his room, carefully closing and locking the door after they had entered.

Once in the room, he removed his hat and the overcoat he had worn buttoned up to his neck and flung them on the bed. Mrs. Phillips uttered a cry and covered her face with her hands.

Jethro's collar and tie were gone, and the buttonholes in the neckband of the shirt were burst so that the shirt hung open. His coat was rumpled and creased as if he had slept in it, but what held their horrified gaze were the dark stains of blood all over the front of his shirt and blue-dotted vest.

"I'm in a devil of a fix," Jethro began in a husky voice, unlike his old cheery one.

"It looks that way," Long answered grimly.

"Jethro," moaned Mrs. Phillips, "you didn't do it, did you?"

Wearily Jethro passed his hand across his forehead and sank into a chair. "I don't know," he sighed. "I wish to God I did know."

"You don't know!" Mrs. Phillips and Long exclaimed together in amazement.

"No, I don't," he doggedly persisted.

"Jethro," Long said, leaning forward, "for your own peace of mind and your wife's we've got to straighten this thing out. I traced you from the time you left home until you left the taxi which had taken you from the hotel on West Eightieth street to Washington Square and walked across the Square. Now try to remember where you went then."

"If you know that much you know more than I do about myself. I don't even remember leaving the hotel on West Eightieth street. I went there with a friend." He stopped short and glanced uneasily at his wife, then continued: "But I don't remember anything else. You say I left there in a taxi and drove to Washington Square. Well, maybe I did, but I have no recollection of it. I was dead drunk the whole time. The first I remembered anything was this afternoon, when I waked up in a cheap hotel on West Twelfth street. I looked just the way you see me now, but I never bothered my head about it; thought maybe I had got into a fight, until I read that description of me in the paper. I have absolutely no idea where I was or what I did between the time I went to the hotel on West Eightieth street and this afternoon when I found myself in the West Twelfth street place. I am afraid to think."

"You've got to think, Jethro. You've got

to help me help you. This mystery must be cleared up."

"I tell you I can't remember. I almost feel like giving myself up to the police and letting them find out where I was."

Mrs. Phillips screamed. "Don't do that, Jethro," she sobbed. "They'll put you in prison and then execute you. They won't try to find any one else. They won't care so long as they get somebody. I don't believe you ever did it. Don't give yourself up to the police."

"I think your wife's advice is good, Jethro," Long said. "You may not have been anywhere near the scene of the crime, but if you give yourself up to the police it will be equivalent to a confession. They will argue that no man who believed himself innocent would brand himself as a murderer. You'll be locked up, of course, and if you say at the trial that you were drunk and don't know where you were or what you did at the time of the murder, I think almost any jury will find you guilty. It's better for us to find out first just where you were."

"It's no use. I've tried my best to remember, but I can't."

"Well, then, I'll have to find out for you," Long decided.

Jethro seized his friend's hand in a convulsive grip. "Thanks, old man. Whether I did it or not, I'll always remember that you stood by me."

"Brace up, Jethro. Take a bath and get straightened out. Better get some rest, too. You look as if you needed it."

"Rest," with a bitter laugh, "as if I could rest with this hanging over me. However, I'll take your advice about the bath."

Long left the Phillips residence and went thoughtfully home. Early the next morning he set out for the place on West Twelfth street, which address Jethro had given him. There he obtained a little information of value. They remembered Jethro had come in some time during the night, "stewed to the gills," the clerk remarked, and had taken a room and gone directly to sleep. The boy who had taken him upstairs stated that Jethro had thrown himself on the bed without undressing, and was asleep even before the boy was out of the room. Where he had come from, or who he was, the hotel neither knew nor cared. So long as he paid his bill he was asked no questions.

"Looked as if he'd been in a peach of a fight," the boy grinned. "Wonder who won and what the other guy looked like at the finish."

Godfrey continued his investigation in and around the hotel, but could learn nothing at all further except that Jethro had come on foot to the hotel, and not in a taxi. Had he been driven to the hotel Long could have traced the driver and then have learned from him where he had picked Jethro up. However, he did not give up the search. He made inquiries in the neighborhood, and finally from a barber near the hotel, who kept open all night, learned that Jethro had come from the direction of Washington Square.

"I'd been out for supper at an Italian restaurant on Washington Square, where I always go," this man told Long. "I was coming back when I met your friend. He looked as if he'd been in an awful fight, all bunged up, clothes torn, and blood all over him. Still he seemed kind of happy, as if he'd got the best of it. He was so drunk, though, he could hardly talk, but he asked me if I knew a place where he could get a good sleep, a place where they would not care how he looked. I took him to the hotel near my place and left him at the door. That's the last I saw of him. Anything wrong?"

"No," Long said. "By the way, what time was it when you met my friend?"

"Must have been about three in the morning."

Long thanked the man and left. The more he learned of Jethro's movements the less he liked the look of things. The murder in Washington Square had been committed about two-thirty, so according to the barber's statement Jethro must have been in the neighborhood of the crime a short time after the crime had been committed. Had he been there when it was committed? He wondered whether any recollection of his acts had yet returned to Jethro and determined to cross-question him thoroughly

again to see if he could not help him to remember something.

He found Jethro at home, hollow-eyed and white-lipped. The uncertainty and suspense seemed to be draining away his vitality.

"I can't stand it, old man," he muttered; "I can't stand it. I tried to go ahead today, as if nothing had happened, but all I could do was wonder whether I was a murderer or not. I can't remember a thing. I'm going down to police headquarters to give myself up. That will end it all."

Mrs. Phillips burst out sobbing.

"Don't," she pleaded, "don't do that, Jethro. If you give yourself up they'll surely put you in jail and execute you."

"Well, if I committed that murder I deserve to be executed," Jethro replied stubbornly. "Anyhow, I can't stand this uncertainty. I'm going to give myself up."

"Don't be foolish," Long said sharply. "Think what you are doing. You're going down to police headquarters to give yourself up as the murderer of that Italian, and yet you admit to me that you have no recollection of where you were or what you were doing at the time of the murder. You don't know whether you killed him or not."

"No, I don't know whether I killed him or not, but I do know one thing. It came to me just a while ago, and it's the only thing I do remember."

"What is it?" Long asked quickly.

"I was in a fight with an Italian."

Mrs. Phillips gave a gasp and seemed about to crumple up in her chair, while Jethro's statement filled Long with something like consternation.?

"How do you know?" he asked.

"Well, it's all rather hazy, but I remember fighting and some one swearing in Italian."

"Is that all?"

"There seemed to be another man besides the Italian and myself, but I can't remember who he was."

"Perhaps the other man killed the Italian," cried Mrs. Phillips, grasping pitifully at a straw of hope.

"I don't know," answered Jethro wearily, passing his hand across his forehead. "I can't even remember that much clearly. It's all hazy, like a dream. Anyway, I'm going to give myself up and settle it."

"Yes, you'll settle it, all right," agreed Long grimly. "Now, look here, Jethro, yesterday when I questioned you, you couldn't remember a thing, and now you remember that you were in a fight with an Italian, and another man was in the fight with you. That is an advance. Perhaps to-morrow you'll remember everything."

"Yes," and Jethro laughed mirthlessly, "perhaps to-morrow I'll remember that I killed him. That would be an advance."

"You make me tired," Long cried, losing patience. "Try to act like a man and not like a baby. There is more than one Italian in New York City, you know. You might have had a fight with any one of them. All that we have learned about your actions might be called circumstantial evidence, and that is not always to be relied on."

"Circumstantial evidence has hanged more than one man," Jethro replied gloomily.

"Yes, and if you insist on letting it hang you, why, I suppose it will, but I see no reason for any man to declare himself guilty of murder when he is not sure that he is guilty."

"Maybe you're right," agreed Jethro with a spark of his old spirit, "but I don't see what I am to do."

"Wait a few days. You are not harming any one by waiting. Maybe you'll remember something, or if not I may be able to dig up this past of yours. You'll gain nothing by giving up."

"All right," agreed Jethro, "I'll wait a day or two, but I don't see how I can stand the suspense."

Knowing Jethro's stubborn nature, Long felt that he had gained a point by having him wait even a day or two. Generally when an idea occurred to Jethro he pigheadedly insisted on carrying it out, no matter what the consequences.

It was late when Long went to bed that night, and it seemed as if he had slept only a few minutes when he was awakened by the repeated ringing of his telephone. In

reality it was eight o'clock, a whole hour later than his usual time for rising.

It was Jethro's wife calling, and he knew from her voice that she was excited.

"Has anything new happened?" he asked.

"No, but Jethro has made up his mind to give himself up to the police to-day. Please, please go down and stop him."

"The fool," Long muttered.

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Phillips. "I begged and pleaded with him, but it was no use, so after he left I called you up. If any one has influence over him it is you."

"Where is he?"

"Gone to his office. He won't leave until ten o'clock, because he has some work to attend to which will keep him busy until then, but he says he is going down as soon as that work is done."

"He promised me he would wait."

"Oh, I know, but he said this morning that he could not stand it, and so he is going to give himself up."

"I'll go right down and talk to him," Long said. "I'll do my best to make him wait a little longer."

He dressed hastily, and after a hurried breakfast set out for Jethro's place of business. It took him half an hour to reach it, and all the time he was on the way he worried for fear Jethro might again change his mind and start for police headquarters before ten o'clock.

However, when he reached his destination and sent in his name by a clerk he was at once admitted to Jethro's private office, and found him seated at his desk moodily examining papers, and now and then dictating to the stenographer at his side. He told the girl to leave the room as Long entered.

"Well," said Jethro, "have you found anything out?"

"Not yet. Last night I instructed one of my best men to make a canvas of all the shops and houses in and around Washington Square to find out whether or not any one saw you. I have not yet heard from him, but if any one saw you or talked with you he'll find that person."

"Well, I don't suppose it will make any difference," Jethro replied. "Everything I've been able to remember and everything you've found out point to the fact that I murdered that Italian. I suppose your man will discover some one who saw me do it. I might just as well give myself up now and be done with it. I'll save the police the trouble of coming after me."

"Now, look here, Jethro, you don't know whether you killed that man or not."

"No, but all the evidence points that way. If I were on a jury for such a case and heard the facts just as they are now I'd decide the man was guilty. Any jury would do the same."

"But you don't really believe you killed that man."

Jethro hesitated a few moments, then blurted out: "As a matter of fact, I'm beginning to believe I did."

Long sat dumfounded.

Just then there was a commotion outside the door of the private office, and a jovial voice with a rich Irish brogue was heard exclaiming: "Oh, come on now, young feller, he'll see me. Don't worry about that."

"The police!" exclaimed Jethro, turning deathly pale.

Suddenly the door of the private office was flung open and a man entered, followed by the feebly protesting clerk.

"Well, well, Mr. Phillips, and how are ye?" exclaimed the newcomer.

"So you've come for me," murmured Jethro through still lips.

"Sure and I've come. Did ye think I wouldn't?"

"No, I knew you would."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the man again, seating himself comfortably in a big armchair. "And sure it was a grand scrap, and didn't we give the ginny a dandy beatin'? You drunk as a lord, too, when we did it. Sure, man, you're a grand little scrapper."

"What do you mean?" Jethro cried, and Long could see that he was trembling. "Who are you?"

"What do I mean? Who am I?" repeated the man in astonishment. "I thought ye said ye knew I was comin'?"

"I mistook you for some one else," Jethro answered.

"Don't ye remember me? Glory be, don't

ye remember the fight we had with the two ginnies down in Eighth street?"

Jethro shook his head. At this point Long spoke.

"Suppose you tell us all about that fight. You see, Mr. Phillips was rather drunk that night."

"He was that," agreed the man with emphasis.

"Well, you see, he doesn't remember where he was or what happened."

"Glory be," ejaculated the man again, "I knew he was drunk, but I didn't know he was as drunk as that. Not remember that fight."

"Let's hear about it," Long urged.

"It was down in Eighth street I got in an argument with one of the ginnies. I don't remember what it was about, but he got fresh and I hit him. We started to mix it, and then along comes the other ginny and started to help the first. I was havin' a hard time to hould me own, and they had me with me back against a railin' when along come Mr. Phillips here."

"What time was it?" Long asked quickly.

"A little after two in the morning. I know, because I just looked at me watch a little while before the fight started."

Jethro gave a half-inarticulate murmur, and his hand, which had been clenched on the desk since the Irishman had first begun to speak, relaxed. Long knew what a weight had been lifted off his mind. At 2:30 a. m., the time when the Italian had been murdered in Washington Square, Jethro had been engaged in another fight several blocks distant. This Irishman could vouch for that.

The Irishman continued his narrative.

"Mr. Phillips jist stood and watched us for a while and thin jist sailed in and helped me. Before long we had thim divils on the run. After the fight was over Mr. Phillips and I had a drink, although, beggin' your pardon, sor"—and the Irishman's blue eyes twinkled at Jethro—"I don't think ye needed it. Thin Mr. Phillips gave me his card and told me to look him up some time."

"I'm mighty glad you did look me up," exclaimed Jethro. "I never was more glad to see any one in my life."

"Ye're a man after me own heart," said the Irishman, clapping him familiarly on the back. "Let's all go and have a drink."

Jethro rose and reached for his hat and overcoat, then stopped and turned slowly toward the two others. There was a look in his face Long had never seen there before.

"I want to telephone my wife first," he said. "Then we'll have lunch together, but I'm off the stuff for good. That was my last spree."

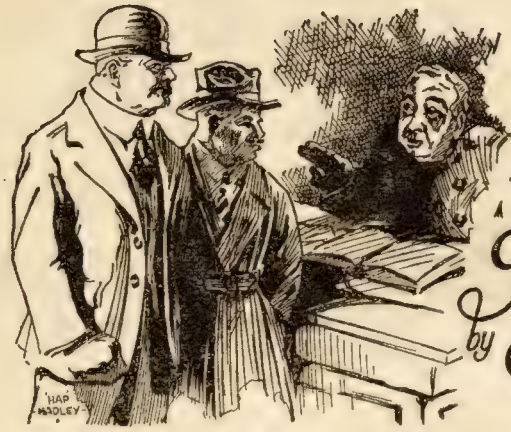
A SUAVE JEWEL THIEF

THE police are searching for a burglar who stole jewelry valued at $5,000 recently from the rooms of Frederick P. Moore, in the cottage adjoining the Piping Rock Club, near Mineola, N. Y.

The property belonged to Mr. Moore and a friend, Thomas H. Wright, of New Orleans. The burglar overlooked a wallet containing $100,000, which was under shirts in the same dresser from which the other jewelry was taken.

Mr. Moore, who is a stock broker and chairman of the board of managers of the Piping Rock Club, left his house that morning and went to a horse show grounds. Some time later a man knocked and told Mr. Moore's valet that his name was Jones, and that he was a friend of Mr. Moore's, who had invited him, he said, to spend the week-end. The valet did not question the man, but showed him to a room at once.

Later in the day Mr. Moore, returning to the house, met Jones in the hallway, but did not speak to him. But when he dressed to go to the polo game he discovered that his studs were gone. Then he made a search of the rooms, finding that the burglar had taken the jewelry.



In the Interest of Science

by Gilbert Hammond

CHAPTER ONE

THE clamorous whistles at Sing Sing and the frenzied departure of motors in all directions filled with armed guards proclaimed the escape of a life-term prisoner. Telephones and telegraph dispatches sent his description broadcast to every village, town and city within a radius of one hundred miles. The New York Central Office was first to receive the startling news, and the chief studied the particulars for a few moments, then summoned two of his best detectives to his office.

"Daly," he remarked, handing the report to the tall, gaunt officer, "read that. A lifer just escaped from Ossining. Last seen heading this way. If he slips through the mob looking for him it will be up to you to pick up his trail and recapture him."

Tom Daly nodded and carefully read the report. Then he handed it to Jerry Grimes, a short stout fellow.

"I'll get on the job at once, sir," said Daly briefly. "Any special orders?"

"No, take Grimes with you and do your best. If anything turns up notify me. This convict King is a desperate man. He'll try to kill you if you attack him. The charge that sent him up the river was murder."

"I know all about the case, as I was the man who caught him," smiled the detective; "I remember King distinctly."

"Then you are the logical man to hunt for him. Better get busy now." The detectives saluted and hurried into the street.

"Which way, Tom?" asked Grimes expectantly.

"Grand Central depot first. He isn't likely to come in on a train, but you never can tell. I'll have the incoming passengers watched first."

Boarding a car, they rode to 42d street and met a detective in the depot. Daly explained the case, gave him a description of King and asked:

"Seen any one like him coming in?"

"No," answered the other. "I'd know him in a minute by his prison pallor and cropped head. What time was he missed?"

"At five o'clock. He wore a convict's uniform, but that's the first thing he'll get rid of if he gets a change of clothing. He might get a wig and stain his face to camouflage himself. King was a doctor before his arrest, and burned his left cheek with a chemical with which he was experimenting. It left a red mark the size of a dime."

"I'll watch for him, Brady. If anything happens I'll ring up headquarters." Brady

nodded, went into a public telephone booth and sent out several calls; when he rejoined Grimes there was a smile of satisfaction on his face.

"I think I've got our bird located," he remarked. "Come on; we've got to hustle uptown."

They sped to the suburbs and hurried into one of the precinct station-houses, where they found a policeman talking to the captain.

"Ah, Daly," the latter called.

"'So, Cap. This the cop who saw the suspected party?"

"So he says. Tell your story, Mulligan."

The patrolman nodded, and eyeing Daly he said:

"I was on me post at six o'clock, when a taxi got a puncture near by and the chauffeur stopped to change the shoe. There was a stylishly dressed guy in the car. His face was as pale as death. On his left cheek he had a round red mark like a burn. I couldn't see his hair, as he had his hat pulled down almost to his ears."

"Describe his features."

The policeman complied, and his description was so thorough that Daly looked delighted.

"That's the man we are after!" he exclaimed. "What was the number of the license plate on the taxi?"

The officer told him.

"Which way did the car go?"

"Down the Grand Concourse."

"Do you know anything else about the matter?"

"Not a thing; I did not know about the escaped prisoner until half an hour later, when I reported here off duty. When I read the alarm and got a description of King, I recalled the man in the cab, as his face tallied with the description of the escaped prisoner. I reported my suspicions to the captain, and had barely finished when you called up and asked if we'd seen a guy looking like King."

"All right. Much obliged. Come along, Jerry. We must get down to the license bureau, find out who drove the taxi and get our paws on the chauffeur. He can tell us where he left the white-faced passenger with a red mark on his cheek."

A train carried them downtown, and upon inquiry they ascertained that the driver of the taxi was Tony Degano, whose stand was at Madison Square. Another ride downtown brought them to their destination, and they were lucky enough to find the hackman.

Daly flashed his shield.

"Degano," he said, "you had a pale-faced man as a passenger uptown about six o'clock; where did you leave that guy?"

"I picked him up near Van Courtlandt Park, officer," answered the Italian in some alarm, "and drove him down to Riverside Drive. He got out on the corner, and stood there lighting a cigar as I drove away. There wasn't anything suspicious about him, so I didn't pay much attention to the man."

"Sure you don't know where he went?"

"I'd take my oath I don't."

"Wasn't you mixed up in getting him away from Sing Sing?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, you helped him to escape, but you couldn't be blamed for that if you didn't know who he was. We are going to find that bird, and if you are lying, God help you."

"I don't know anything about him," said Tony in alarm.

"We'll see. There's nothing against you now, but we'll pick you up if it becomes necessary. Do you get me?"

"I'm not running away," growled the Italian in surly tones.

The detective made him drive them to the corner where he claimed he had dropped his fare, and there they dismissed him.

Thus far the trail had been an easy one, but now it ended at a blank wall, and the detectives were puzzled to know where to look next. Inquiry was their only recourse, so they began a systematic canvass of the neighborhood, searching for a clue to the convict's trail. Several hours of tedious and repeated inquiry followed. The detectives were baffled at every turn until Daly finally accosted an old private watchman at a new building in course of erection.

"Sure I saw a party lookin' like ther feller you describe," said he, puffing at his old clay pipe. "He got out of a taxi down on the corner, lit a cigar and headed straight for that big house across the street. It's the home of a rich man named Saunders." He pointed at a fine-looking dwelling without lights in any of the windows, and Daly thanked the old man and moved away.

"Guess we've run him to cover at last, Jerry," he muttered grimly, and getting a grip on his automatic he rushed across the street, followed by Grimes, and ran up the front stoop of the gloomy-looking house.

CHAPTER TWO

AN hour earlier a well-dressed man jauntily swinging a cane halted in front of the Riverside Drive home of the financier, Leo Saunders. It was after twelve o'clock; few pedestrians were to be seen, although a continual stream of autos sped by on the Drive. Off to the west the Palisades rose indistinctly against the background of the star-lit sky, and occasional whistles of tugs and steamboats came from the wide river flowing darkly between the shores of the two States.

The man hesitated for a few seconds, then walked briskly up the low flight of stone steps and rang the bell. A butler appeared presently to open the door and, receiving a name with which he was evidently unfamiliar, admitted the stranger and departed to inform his master.

"Who the devil is it at this time of night?" Saunders snapped from his desk in the library. "I don't remember ever having heard the name before. What's his business?"

"He didn't say, sir, except that it was very urgent."

Saunders reflected a moment, then said:

"Show him in."

The stranger was ushered into the library. The butler softly closed the door and retired, leaving the two together. Saunders finished some writing before looking up, as was his deliberate habit.

He sat staring at a silent figure in front of him several seconds before a sudden recognition caused him to sit bolt upright in his chair.

"James King!" he articulated in a frightened whisper.

"The same," said the newcomer pleasantly. "You're not scared, are you? Where's that iron nerve that has all of Wall Street eating out of your hand?"

Saunders's astonishment vented itself in a slight, disgruntled laugh.

"I thought you were in prison," he said.

"If you had read the evening papers you'd have known different. After getting away from the prison I held up a man in an auto, frisked him of his roll, lifted his clothes and watch, and then sped off to visit you. I abandoned the stolen car and a taxi brought me over here. If you behave nicely I'm never going back."

"What do you think I'm going to do for you? You ought to know me well enough to realize I'm not the kind to be bluffed."

"You're not going to be bluffed, Saunders. You'll be given certain instructions; whether or not you carry them out is up to you. I guess you remember what I was sent up for."

"What's the use of rehashing all that now?"

"Because I have a reason which I'll explain when I've told you the consequences of my conviction upon your charges and those of your rotten perjurers. As you know, I was the physician of old Robert Wiley, your uncle, in his last sickness. After his death it was discovered that he had been poisoned. You were his sole heir. You bribed witnesses right and left until you built up a case against me that I couldn't get out of. I was sent up for life without even a reasonable motive proved against me. But you know all that. It's the sequel I want to tell you about. I had been in prison two years when I got word that my mother had died. They didn't have to tell me what killed her—I knew. She had looked forward throughout all my college years—when I had the cursed luck to become acquainted with you—to my career as a doctor. She had never thought of her son ex-

cept in terms of a future 'eminent physician.' Well, my imprisonment meant her death."

King was silent for a moment.

"Very pathetic!" commented Saunders with a simulated yawn. "Is that all?"

"No!" King came back fiercely. "I'll tell you something else. Months after my mother's death I received a letter from the girl to whom I was engaged. She was in despair. Who could blame her? There was no hope of our ever getting married, so she married another man. That night in my cell I made a vow that when you and I met again we were going to settle up, and, by God, that's what I'm here to do!"

"Well, what sort of settling do you propose?"

"You caused me to drop my career in one profession. Well, you're going to start me off in another. With the police howling on my trail, there's no chance of my ever getting an honest job. There's just one thing open to me. I'm going to adopt a criminal career. You will be the first and heaviest contributor."

"I see. You want money. I thought you'd get around to that. Now listen." Saunders's face grew suddenly hard as he fixed King with a steely glance.

"If you didn't kill my uncle, who did? Seven witnesses testified to circumstances pointing to your guilt. The old man liked you, and left you a few thousands in his will, a fact with which you were well acquainted. Still I'm not narrow-minded. You mentioned an old friendship just now. For the sake of that friendship I'm willing to believe that there may have been a mistake. The police may have framed up a case against you, so that they could make somebody the goat. Now I'm willing to give you a thousand dollars and say nothing about your visit here, on condition that you beat it and never annoy me again. Otherwise I shall turn you over to the police."

He played significantly with the telephone on his desk. King smiled amusedly.

"You are very charitable and generous with your thousand dollars and your silence. But I want a lot more money than you're ever likely to give me voluntarily. As to turning me over to the police"—he leisurely pulled out an automatic—"you won't do that without my permission, which you're not going to get."

Saunders glanced at the gun with which King was toying lightly, and smiled contemptuously.

"I suppose you think you're going to bluff me into handing you a million dollars with that thing. You wouldn't get a wooden nickel out of me now."

"I won't, eh? Are you in the habit of fooling yourself?"

"I never did that in my life."

King laughed.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "even the wisest of men fool themselves more than they ever fool anybody else. Before I am done with you I propose to demonstrate how much of a fool you can make of yourself. Now I happen to know that you intend leaving for New Mexico to look over some oil wells down there. You are supposed to leave early to-morrow morning—before your servants are up, I think. I know this because I see it detailed in that letter lying on that desk right now, the one you were writing when I came in. Very convenient for me because you won't be missed for a week."

"What's the idea? You don't think you can kidnap me, do you?"

"Well, you might be temporarily detained."

Suddenly the jailbird jumped to his feet and pointed the automatic at Saunders's head.

"Now then, get up!" he commanded crisply. "Make it snappy and don't give me any argument."

Somewhat bewildered but eying King craftily, Saunders rose to his feet. Upon King's instructions he walked silently to a corner of the room and picked up a valise.

"You are now leaving for New Mexico several hours ahead of time. Be sure you let the butler at the door know that fact. I'll be right behind you. And don't forget this 'gat' in my pocket because all I want is a very slight excuse to use it."

Smiling extreme disgust at himself, Saunders, valise in hand, moved toward the

folding doors, King directly behind him. The surprised butler received the glumly imparted information that circumstances had caused his master to decide to leave for New Mexico immediately, and opening the door, let the two out into the night.

Down the street, where the new building was going up, the old watchman had just stepped into his shanty and therefore did not see the two men leave the house.

CHAPTER THREE

OBEYING the convict, Saunders crossed the Drive to Riverside Park, and walked by his side to the entrance. Under the lamplights a few late passers-by might have been startled by the tense expressions on the faces of the men, but they could observe nothing directly suspicious. Inside the park they paced silently along the winding asphalt paths. A policeman sauntered past them, but a sharp jab in the side with King's concealed automatic impressed Saunders with the extreme danger of attempting to catch his attention. Reaching the lower side of the park they crossed the railroad tracks running along the river front. Then they walked north along the track for several hundred yards, Saunders becoming more and more amazed, and for the first time seriously alarmed. Was he going to be drowned, tied to the track, or disposed of in some like manner? King volunteered nothing but silent prods with his weapon. Finally, acting upon a brief command, Saunders stepped away from the tracks and headed directly toward the water front. Anchored near the small, loose tracks which composed the extreme edge of the shore line he could dimly make out what appeared to be a motor-boat of rather large dimensions. As they approached a little closer King whistled softly several times until answered by similar whistles from aboard the boat. A dark figure appeared on the deck and made ready to assist King's captive scale the sides of the boat. Saunders, egged forward, picked his way clumsily over the rocks and, seized by the outstretched hands of the individual on board, was hoisted to the deck and held firmly until King had boarded.

The door of the cabin was opened and Saunders was thrust inside. King followed him in and presently the other man entered with a lantern and lighted two lamps in the cabin. Saunders glanced uneasily about him. The room in which he found himself was small enough, not more than three steps in width nor four in length. A table in the middle blocked any freedom of movement, and two bunks, one on either side of the cabin, occupied still more space. Two chairs, one with a broken back, the other without any, completed the furniture.

Saunders turned his attention to King's confederate. He was a tall fellow with high, gaunt cheek bones protruding over a mass of thick black whiskers. His dark eyes, stolid in expression, were sunk so deep in his head that they seemed at times to have disappeared altogether. He obeyed King's orders passively and seemed to be entirely uninterested in the proceedings. Evidently not well acquainted with King nor concerned with his motives, Saunders thought. That might be taken advantage of later.

"Well, Saunders," King said at length, "this is to be your headquarters for a few days."

Saunders clenched his fists angrily.

"You're carrying this bluff pretty far," he snapped. "What do you expect to get by it? I haven't any money with me."

"Maybe I want revenge," suggested King coolly.

"If you're going to murder me, then why don't you do it? What's the idea of keeping me in this hole?"

King laughed.

"That's your little bluff, Saunders," he said. You've been enjoying life too well lately to be so ready to kick off. There's no use in your trying to hasten your murder—I'll attend to that at my leisure. As to what I expect to get out of you, you'll find that out in a short time. Now, Hank!"

Saunders felt his arms suddenly gripped from behind by hands that bit like a steel trap. Lifted bodily nearly off the floor,

he was thrown into a chair with terrific force. Held there immovably by the powerful Hank from behind, he saw King open a small black bag of the type used by physicians and take from it a glistening metal instrument. As King brought it closer to one of the lamps for the purpose of examining it Saunders could see that it was an inoculating needle. One of the hands that held him released his arm and gripped his throat. While he frantically clawed at the steel fingers about his neck which pressed with strangling force, his coat sleeve was ripped violently open up to his shoulder. Then the pressure was taken from his throat leaving him gasping painfully.

He saw King, instrument in hand, advance toward him, smiling devilishly. He cried out in horror. The convict then gripped his arm and rolled up his shirt sleeve. His struggles were useless. One wrist was twisted agonizingly behind his back by the man who held him. For one horribly painful moment he felt the burning needle thrust to its very extremity into the fleshy part of his arm. He saw King pressing the syringe and he knew that some foreign fluid was being pumped into his blood.

The needle was withdrawn. King laughed pleasantly. "Having no opportunities here for sterilizing the needle properly," he said, "I hope you don't die of blood poison before that stuff starts to work."

He did not suspect that the two detectives were trailing him, or he might not have had such a confident air.

CHAPTER FOUR

"A LOT of good it'll do you," cried Saunders. You'll never get anything out of me no matter what kind of poison you shoot into me!"

King calmly lit a cigarette and watched intently the thin stream of smoke curl gently toward the ceiling. He puffed contentedly several times before he finally said:

"You wouldn't be so confident of that, Saunders, if you knew just what is now circulating through your system."

Saunders had been released from the hands that had held him and was clutching his punctured arm fiercely. He could say nothing. He only looked at his tormentor.

"I'll tell you a little later," said King, answering the look. "That stuff won't affect you for some time yet. In the meanwhile we'll get down to business. You'd better be reasonable about it."

"I'll have no business with you, you crook, no matter what you've inoculated me with."

"Oh, lay off that bluff. You'll talk business quickly enough. Now let me tell you a few things. You're a man who has always depended, more or less, on shady transactions for your wealth. Very often this means a great deal of money expended in bribes—public officials and various others who might tell things if they wanted to. It is neither customary nor safe to write checks for these little sums of money. Signatures are very incriminating. Consequently, when business is lively you must have quite a supply of funds on hand. Just at present, with several of your oil dealings under investigation because of numerous complaints against you, the chances are you're pretty well prepared to meet trouble with your bank roll."

King paused and gazed at his prisoner in amused inquiry. But Saunders was staring impenetrably at one of the lamps.

"I noticed you have in your library quite a big safe—looks to me like a late model, though I haven't had much opportunity to observe during the last eight years, thanks to you. There's just one reason for such a husky affair in the library—the safekeeping of valuables not convenient to have elsewhere. I wouldn't be surprised if there are hundreds of thousands of dollars in that safe for secret funds of various kinds. Am I right?"

Saunders still appeared sullenly silent, but the nervous twitching of his face and the convulsive clutching of the hand which caressed the puncture in his arm revealed

to King the storm of wrath which raged within him.

"I see I am right," he continued, puffing at the cigarette with a gratified air. "Well, to get down to business, as men of affairs like you and me, I want you to do just this: write me a letter to present to the butler in your house, authorizing me to search among your effects for certain papers. These papers, of course, will be imaginary but they will give me an excuse to get into your safe. Of course you'll further favor me with the combination of the safe. After I've secured whatever valuables there are I'll give you your full freedom. You deserve far worse than this, but as the King said to Laertes in Hamlet——"

Red in the face with fury Saunders had jumped erect and shouted in tones of the greatest anger:

"Do you want to know what I think of your proposition?"

"I can guess that from your manner."

"You can go straight——"

Before he could break into profanity he was seized from behind again and seated with a violence that shook the little boat. King had not changed expression. He continued to smile as placidly as ever. Regarding Saunders with an almost pitying smile, he said:

"Your decision is practically immaterial to me. I have other considerations in your disposal beside money. I'll explain to you."

Saunders looked at him contemptuously.

"Go ahead," he said; "you're going to do a lot of explaining of a different kind to the prison officials in a short time."

"About eight years ago, "King went on, "I was a doctor and chemist with an exceedingly brilliant future. My chemical discoveries were beginning to attract attention and I was making a name for myself. Then —by reason of your money—I was sent up for the poisoning of your uncle, so crude a job that I would have been ashamed to have had any hand in it on professional grounds alone.

"Up to that time I experimented with toxins. One day, after months of exhaustive experimenting, I evolved an anti-toxin for a disease which was far more effective and beneficial than the existing one, discovered as that one was by one of the world's greatest scientists. On monkeys and guinea pigs it worked perfectly. I was about to perform the final experiments that were to have made me famous when I was carried off to jail. I propose to resume, however, where I left off. With this end in view I have inoculated you with this disease. My anti-toxin is the only thing in the world which can save you from death now—that is, if it will work on a human being."

Beads of sweat, glistening under the faint light of the lamps, stood out on Saunders' forehead. His breathing was heavy and catchy and his fingers pressed into his punctured arm with a new horror as he thought of the germs of some frightful disease circulating through his veins. His terrified eyes gazed so frozenly at the lamp that when finally he attempted to look at King he could see nothing but merging glares of light.

"This disease," King continued, his voice growing more tense, "is one of the most horrible known to man. Slowly the afflicted victim loses control of his reason and becomes a wild, frantic madman, tortured with fevers and racked with pain. Day by day he grows more like a snarling, yapping, crazed dog, till finally he dies a convulsive, agonized death. Such is hydrophobia, commonly known as rabies."

With faint gasps that suggested one already in the last throes of death, Saunders repeated in dazed tones:

"Rabies! Rabies!"

King continued:

"Pasteur's treatment for this disease is the only preventive known, but it is practically useless if the germs have spread extensively through the system. Pasteur's treatment is a preventive, but mine is a cure—it acts after the symptoms have appeared. I have cured in animals advanced cases of rabies. I may or may not have the opportunity to experiment on a human being. It all lies with you. If you accept my offer of release from the pangs of the disease—with, of course, a *possible* hope of recovery—for a heavy financial

consideration I'll inoculate you with the serum immediately after you have signed a paper I have ready for you."

All the blind obstinacy in Saunders's character stiffened against the deadly ingeniousness of this intimidation.

"You, your anti-toxin and Pasteur can all be hanged together! There's no such disease as rabies—it's all a myth. Expert medical scientists have testified to the fact that it's nothing but a bugbear to scare people into taking expensive treatments. If you want to extort money out of me, you damned medical crook, you'd better try something on me that I don't know anything about!"

"That's just what I have done," replied King; "and the great beauty of it is that I don't know anything about it myself in this case, since I've never tried it on a human being before."

He paused, watching Saunders closely for a few seconds and then continued:

"You wish you could believe what you have just said, don't you? You wish you were more confident of your assertion. But you're not, Saunders, you're badly scared. I can see it in your eyes. Now if you will come to the terms I have offered you I'll prepare and administer the anti-toxin and save your life. If you refuse the disease will kill you and the river will take care of your carcass. How about it?"

"No!"

"All right. You've made up your mind so I'll have to bid you good-by. You will be kept confined in this room by my assistant and the disease can take its course."

He opened the door with a grim smile on his face and Saunders could hear him climb down the side of the boat. After a few silent minutes King's steel-armed confederate released his hold and, watching him warily, likewise departed, locking the door on the outside.

Some time in the night Saunders roused himself from the semi-conscious stupor into which he had fallen. He was not certain whether his coma had been due to the effects of the inoculation or to his own terror. He was not certain, in fact, that it was still night, for the windows had been boarded up with heavy planks and there was no other opening by which the light of day could creep in. From the slight rocking of the boat and the faint chug of the motor he knew they were now moving. His senses further informed him, through the dismal whistling of railroad engines and the clanking jolts of freight cars as they were coupled to the rest of the train with a startling racket that seemed all out of place in the profound silence, that they were still rather near the shore.

From a dull stupor he passed into a state of mind where thoughts ran with frenzied speed through his delirious brain—and by no effort could he hold one long enough to examine it. They flashed by and disappeared almost before he was conscious of their existence. Trivial things, entirely out of proportion with his present difficulties, floated before his mind in an infinite host. What was the last quotation for U. S. Steel in the market? Before he could frame the slightest answer his mind was busying itself with the process of how steam moved an engine, suggested, probably, by the sound of steam-letting from those on the shore near by. Then it feverishly occurred to him to wonder whether there was really such a thing as a soul—and if he died insane, would his soul remain crazy?

This mental riot continued for what he estimated to be several hours before he finally regained sufficient command over himself to think connectedly and rationally. His brainstorm had been the result of a nervous breakdown following the ordeal to which he had been subjected by King, he assured himself.

He wanted to lie down and rest. Both bunks were absolutely devoid of padding and bed-clothing, leaving nothing for him to sleep on but the bare wood. The rolling of the boat made this a veritable torture rack but his weary brain finally lost consciousness and he passed into a fitful sleep.

He awoke under the impression that he had been sleeping for days. His head was throbbing, he was conscious of a burning thirst; there was an indescribably nasty taste in his mouth, caused, no doubt, by his having inhaled the smoke from the oil

lantern. He was conscious of being very hungry, but this craving was far exceeded by a tremendous desire for water.

The door was cautiously opened and a hairy, brawny arm extended a tin dipper full of water. Withdrawing itself, it again appeared with a large can of beans, already opened. Saunders seized the dipper eagerly and applied it to his lips. He had swallowed perhaps twice when a feeling of agonizing nausea came over him. Somehow the taste of the water caused an unspeakably sickening sensation within him and he flung the dipper violently away; his mouth burned and his thirst had become fiercer than ever.

"Where are we?" he shouted through the door as he fancied he heard the footsteps retreat. "How long have I been in here?"

"Not more'n a mile away fr'm where we started," came a faint reply from somewhere. "You've been in there about four hours. It's just dawn now."

Just dawn! He could have sworn he had been confined four times four hours. He pondered nervously over this as he crammed the beans down his throat with his hand, like any primitive savage. He glanced at the wet floor and wondered what it was that had caused the water to be so utterly revolting to him.

Then it came to him in a flash that left him shaken and trembling, his hand poised half way to his mouth. A victim of hydrophobia detested water and under no circumstances could take it into his system. He viewed the liquid with a new horror. Could this be the reason the water proved so repulsive to him? Were the germs of rabies really beginning to take effect?

The glare of the lantern which his eyes retained as they feverishly swept the dim room seemed to form curious, whirling, shifting letters and spell the words "rabies." In a sudden frenzy he sprang toward it, turned the wick so low that the flame jumped spasmodically, and then dashed it violently against the paneled wall of the cabin. His cheek was cut by splinters of flying glass and the blood flowed profusely, but he paid no attention to his wounds. The darkness brought him no relief. Where he once had seen but one fiery eye he now saw a thousand mocking ones. Little points of light, they danced gayly before his vision and half crazed him. He staggered dizzily on his feet.

Finally he sank to the floor, groaning, and buried his head in his arms. Still the vision persisted, increased with the pressure on his eyes; and when, after what seemed to him an infinite length of time, he regained consciousness of his surroundings, he had a confused impression that he had been in a madhouse filled with howling, dancing maniacs. The points of light which he had seen during his conscious moments had assumed human shapes and ridden crazily through his delirious dream. The roar in his ears had become the babble of madmen. He was conscious of a violent headache. The evil taste of the water still remained in his mouth; it grew more intense as the hours progressed and he tried to get rid of it by inhaling the foul air of the room, but the taste persisted. He got weakly to his knees and crawling to the wall slumped feebly against it. His brain was too numb to think or wonder. So time went on. Hours seemed to have passed before another meal was pushed through the door; he was surprised when told it was only noon. He drank a very little of the water —he could not endure a tenth of the amount needed to quench his raging thirst—and threw the rest away.

His keeper peered at him through the doorway for several seconds before closing the door with a smile of grim amusement on his face. Saunders wondered vaguely what caused this humorless pleasure. Suddenly it occurred to him that he must be a frightful spectacle to look at. His agonizing experience had made his eyes wild and haggard, he knew; the self-imposed darkness had given them an unpleasantly staring appearance. His face was stained with blood and streaked with dirt; his hair was disheveled.

"He thinks I'm going mad," he muttered hoarsely. "God! I am mad!"

The last resistance of his will collapsed. He wanted his freedom—his sanity! He would meet any demand that King would make. Pounding frantically on the door, he

shouted wildly to indicate his surrender. There was no answer, nor did he hear any motion on the deck outside. It was perhaps half an hour before he heard a noise like the clambering of some one on the side of the boat. There was a tramping on the deck for several seconds, and then the door was opened.

The sudden light of the afternoon sun dazzled his throbbing eyes to such an extent that he was compelled momentarily to cover them with his arms. He heard a pleasant, familiar laugh and looked up quickly.

King stood in the doorway, his face radiant with amusement as though he were witnessing something very comical. His attitude would have infuriated Saunders had he been less feeble.

"Well, Saunders," said King in the most agreeable of tones, "you look done up. Do you want to talk business yet or are you willing to remain an experiment for the advancement of science?"

"I'll do whatever you want," Saunders replied dumbly.

King chuckled.

"Bring me the valise," he said to Hank, who had followed him into the room. His assistant disappeared toward the front of the boat and presently returned with the handbag which Saunders, upon King's instructions, had carried with him when they had left the house. The convict opened it and began searching about inside; presently he withdrew his hand with some letterhead paper inscribed with Saunders's name. Placing the paper on an oblong box which he had stood on end for the purpose, he took a fountain-pen from his vest and handed it to his prisoner.

"Address this to the butler at your house, whatever his title is, and write as follows":

Saunders took the pen and prepared to write. His hand shook, but he made every effort to control himself, realizing that King would accept no suspiciously jerky handwriting. He addressed the letter as he had been instructed.

"Allow bearer, my business partner," King went on to dictate, "to search among my effects for certain necessary papers I have left behind. He returns particularly for this purpose. You will give him the freedom of my library."

"Now sign it."

Saunders placed his signature under it. On another piece of paper, in obedience to King, he wrote the combination of his safe.

Folding both papers separately and placing them in an inside pocket the convict prepared to leave and was closing the door behind him when Saunders exclaimed:

"What are you going for? Aren't you going to treat me for this damned plague you've inoculated me with?"

"Have a little patience, can't you?" King came back, coolly; "wait until we see whether this plan succeeds. If it doesn't, and I get pinched, there's nothing on earth can save you."

Detective Daly and his partner had rung the bell at the Saunders house, and after some delay the butler opened the door.

"Is your boss in?" demanded the headquarters man.

"No, sir," replied the butler, "He went out half an hour ago."

"Didn't he have a caller?"

"Yes, sir. A man with a terrible white face."

"Where is the man?"

"He went with Mr. Saunders, sir."

"Don't you dare lie to me!" fiercely cried Daly, gripping the butler's arm and displaying his badge. "That guy is a crook and we want him. Come clean! Where is he?"

"I tell you he went out with Mr. Saunders."

"What were they talking about inside there?" demanded Daly, who was familiar with servants habit of eavesdropping. The butler gave himself away with a nervous start, and Daly drew his billy.

"Say," he roared, "if you don't tell me anything they said I'll lay you out with this club!"

"I'll tell! I'll tell!" faltered the butler in alarm, and he repeated all that had passed between King and the financier.

"A queer case," muttered Jerry. "It

looks as if Saunders framed King, and sent him up for a job he did himself."

"We'll find out in due time," said Daly, then he asked the butler: "Where did Saunders go with his caller?"

"I saw them cross the Drive, sir, and start toward the river."

"Looks as if King was going to get square with Saunders," reflected Daly. "He may kill him. We'd better find those two men before anything serious happens."

He nodded to the butler, and followed by Jerry he hurried off in the general direction taken by King and Saunders.

CHAPTER FIVE

SAUNDERS had been again confined in the cabin which was furnished with another lantern. In a state of the most wretched anxiety he prepared to wait King's return. He wondered if the doctor actually could cure hydrophobia. Could he cure so advanced a case as he was certain his must be? Rabies! He knew it could develop in as short a time as three days if the virus was inoculated through the bite of a dog, yet he thought he had felt its effect within twelve hours after his inoculation. What an extraordinarily powerful germ culture must have been introduced into his system, he reflected in terror. And what assurance did he have that King would attempt to cure the disease, even if he could?

Perhaps half an hour of this mental agony had elapsed since the convict's departure when suddenly, rendered very acute of hearing because of his extreme nervous condition, his ears caught the slight sound of the scraping of a boat alongside of the one upon which he was confined. He listened anxiously. Somebody was clambering aboard. Another followed; then a third who seemed to perform the simple athletic feat very clumsily.

A few seconds elapsed in which Saunders could hear nothing but the tiptoeing of individuals scarcely built for stealthy movement. Suddenly there came a shout, some wild swearing, the noise of a confused running about the deck and finally a violent struggle which terminated in the admonition to "Keep quiet before you getcher skull bashed in!"

Saunders heard the door unlocked from the outside; an instant later it was flung open. Blinded by the sudden glare of daylight he stood for a moment blinking at the people who had released him.

"What the deuce is this?" came a startled exclamation.

"Must be a loose bolt from the asylum. How the devil did he get here?"

Before him stood four men. Two of them were Hank and King—handcuffed and linked together. The other two, the ones who had uttered the amazed ejaculations, were a pair of authoritative-looking men whom he had never seen before. The surprise of the encounter was principally on their part at Saunders' peculiar appearance, which was calculated to amaze even central office men.

Observing the dazed and disorderly condition of the man before them, Daly took a step forward and shook him, scrutinizing his features intently.

"Jerry," he exclaimed, addressing the other detective, "do you know who this is?"

"No, can't say I do," replied Jerry, after a similar examination of Saunders's countenance.

"This is Saunders, the oil man!"

"What d'ya mean—that wreck!"

"Absolutely. Take a good slant at that map on him. You couldn't mistake it if you had ever seen him or his picture."

"Yes, I'm the man you mention," Saunders broke in desperately. "What do you want?"

He saw himself in the greatest danger of dying of the affliction with which he had been inoculated. With King arrested all hope of cure would vanish. King could not be compelled by the police to treat him, as he was already a "lifer," and had nothing to lose by refusing to do so.

"What do we want?" exclaimed Detective Daly, interrupting his meditation. "You look like you ought to be glad to see us. We caught this sporty dressed guy," he indicated King, "just as he pulled up along-

side of the shore in a rowboat. He had some papers with him, but tore 'em up. So all we saw was pieces of them floating down the river. We were wandering along the shore, looking for you, when we noticed him get off the motorboat into the rowboat. When he came in a little nearer we got a better look at him. It didn't seem right that such a classy guy should have anything to do with such a dirty-looking thing as this motorboat. We slipped out of sight, and sure enough when he came good and close we saw he was the escaped lifer, King. He didn't give us much trouble. I guess he was making it hot for you for having him sent up, huh?"

"On the contrary," interjected King coolly, "I have been convincing Mr. Saunders that the best thing for him to do is to tell the truth about the murder of old Mr. Wiley, for which I was convicted. Are you prepared to do this in the form of a written and signed confession, Saunders?"

He gazed at Saunders with ominous, half-closed eyes, full of meaning. Saunders's feverishly flushed face turned ghastly pale for a second. He swallowed several times and looked weakly from face to face. Finally, to the astonishment of the two detectives, he gasped:

"Yes."

King smiled triumphantly, but to himself he cursed bitterly. He had been cheated of the contents of Saunders's safe, barely managing to rid himself of the papers giving him access to it before his capture by the detectives. True, he now stood a chance for freedom by reason of Saunders's forthcoming confession.

"Do you mean to say," inquired one of the incredulous detectives, "that you intend making a voluntary written confession concerning the murder of Wiley?"

"Again a feeble "Yes" from Saunders.

"Do you realize that whatever you say or write to that effect will be used to prosecute you?"

"Yes."

Daly was amazed at such an inconceivable a course. He was uncertain what to do. Plainly he considered Saunders either not mentally competent or an ass.

"Give him a pen and some paper and see what he has to say, Tom," put in Daly.

A fountain-pen was produced and some of Saunders's own letterhead paper was gathered from the desk, to which it had blown from the inverted box.

"And you'd better not write anything you can deny later," King mildly suggested.

Saunders began to write. He understood the convict's suggestion. He realized what it meant to put down names and facts that only he could know—to give so detailed an account that this statement could easily be verified. King would accept no less than the most circumstantial confession. Yet he was a rich man and his wealth might be relied upon to ease the law's force. On one hand was a possible prison term, on the other an agonizing death. He wrote a complete and explicit confession.

After he had finished Detective Daly picked up the confession and read it aloud.

"That ought to make investigation easy," King commented when the reading ended. He had commenced to explain, at some length, parts of the confession that seemed obscure when he was savagely interrupted by Saunders.

"Well!" shouted Saunders, "are you going to leave me to die like a dog?"

The startled detectives stared at him, and King smiled faintly.

"Beyond my drugging your water a little," he said, "you've simply been fooling yourself. I only gave you a shot of salt water. You haven't got hydrophobia any more than I have."

When King was honorably discharged and Saunders took his place in prison it is fair to assume that the ex-convict did not follow a career of crime.

Finger-prints in Crime Detection

By CARL H. GETZ

ONLY the criminologist has any adequate appreciation of the part played by dactyloscopy, or the examination and comparison of finger-prints, in the discovery and detection of criminals. There are two different spheres of use in dactyloscopy:

1. The recognition and reidentification of second offenders. For this immense quantities of finger-prints are preserved in the central police records offices in civilized countries. This method has practically supplanted in France the old methods of anthropometry—the Bertillon system of measuring head, foot, forearm, etc.

2. The finger-prints left on the scene of a crime may assist the police to identify the criminal if he happens either to be a second offender or to remain in close touch with the surroundings of the crime.

The former classes of cases are much more difficult than is generally supposed, unless the criminal has left the trace of several fingers. The unwieldy archives of central police depots are still mostly arranged on the anthropometric system, or alphabetically, and search among them for a given print is an almost impossible task.

The classical instance of detection by this method is the Scheffer case in France in 1902. A servant had been murdered and numerous articles of value belonging to her master stolen. Dr. Alphonse Bertillon found a set of four finger-prints on a window-pane; he photographed them, and after a patient search in the Paris record office he succeeded in identifying them as those of a habitual criminal. The man confessed and was executed.

Dactyloscopy is founded on the theory that no two persons have identical finger-prints. Galton offered a mathematical proof that two exactly similar prints could only be found in a series of at least sixty-four billion. The present population of the world may roughly be estimated at one and a half billion. Doctor Ramos, the Brazilian expert, calculated that it would require five million years, roughly, to find two exactly similar finger-prints. Both of these calculations are probably below the theoretical truth, for a greater number of "points" is now noticed than either took into calculation.

That digital patterns are in no way hereditary was proved by the researches of Rodolfo Senet and Forgeot. The identity cards which tramps and gypsies are obliged to take out in France bearing the print of their fingers for the last fifteen years have shown that there is no relationship between the finger-prints of different members of the same family.

There are two exceptions to this rule: idiots have a certain uniformity of design in their digital designs, and twin brothers, especially when young, are often analogous. However, this is only a general resemblance, and neither in the "points" nor in the arrangement of the pores is there the least chance of confusion.

Habitual criminals have long learned the danger to them of the new science of dectyloscopy.

In spite of the fact that the lines cannot be changed by any means, not even by burning, this painful process is sometimes tried. Burning irons, boiling water, boiling oil have all been used by the criminal to destroy the telltale lines. As soon as the wound heals, however, the skin is replaced in exactly the same design by the new skin underneath. Forty-eight hours' quiet, if necessary, in a straight-jacket, is

usually sufficient to restore the damaged finger-ends.

One of the first tasks of the detective on the scene of a crime is to look for finger-prints. This he does on every polished surface, on pieces of window glass, on bottles, on mirrors. Papers often yield clues, but linen never, except in the case of celluloid collars.

Finally finger-prints made with blood have been found on the skin of a murdered person.

Finger-prints are sought with the aid of oblique light, for they are generally invisible under direct rays. When found they are brought up with red lead. Sulphate of lead is best for bringing up marks on paper. Generally the object on which the finger-print is found is packed in a special box if possible and sent to the laboratory, so that the best use of its often fragmentary print may be made by expert hands.

Criminals, especially in London and Lucerne, are taking more and more to the use of gloves to avoid leaving finger-prints. This has serious disadvantages for them, for at such moments they want their keenest powers of touch, and even in the case of a modern scientific criminal the search for finger-prints must never be despaired of. As a matter of fact, even gloves, except of rubber or leather, do sometimes allow of leaving quite usual finger-prints. Stockis, of Liege, has invented a new technique for dealing with prints left by gloves. In one case near Lyons Doctor Locard succeeded in finding a sufficient print, although the criminal, a burglar, had taken the trouble to wrap his finger-tips in cotton cloth.

A much greater dangerous counter offensive of the criminal is the increasing number of forged prints left behind. For finger-prints can be forged by the use of plaster molds transferred to rubber stamps, and left to puzzle the police on the scene of the crime.

The danger was first signaled from Stockholm, where German criminals were found in possession of rubber stamps bearing finger-prints, not of course their own.

The latest development of dactyloscopy, "poroscopy," or the study of the pores of the skin of the finger-tips, has practically eliminated this danger in countries where it is understood and practised, for no rubber stamp will transfer the microscopic indefinitely varied "pits" left by the ends of the sweat glands of the finger-tips. The minute pores were at first neglected as a possible additional means of identification owing to the idea that such could not in the nature of things be stable, and must vary enormously in the life of each individual. Experiment has shown, however, that this is not the case, that in examination of the pores of individuals over a series of years there has not been the slightest change in their comparative position or form. The pores are as distinctive and unalterable as the lines of the finger-tips themselves.

The difficulty about poroscopy is the extreme minuteness of the traces of the glands. The usual method in favor to-day is by means of enlarged photographs, 16 or 17 diameters being necessary for thorough examination.

The objections which this system of identification met when first introduced are now seldom heard. In Italy, Portugal, Switzerland and Norway, dactyloscopic evidence is used without question. In the United States courts have convicted on finger-print evidence alone.

Here, as in other parts of the modern detective's equipment, the search is always tending to be carried into the minutely small and away from the deductively psychological methods. The modern detective is not one who goes from place to place with a large magnifying-glass such as Sherlock Holmes carried with him always. Instead he uses a high-power microscope in a laboratory and also a camera with its various kinds of lenses.

It is a curious fact that one of the leading students of dactyloscopy is a woman, Miss Ingeborg Charlotte Hellner-Nielson, of Denmark. She was in this country recently for the world congress of criminologists, and she had this to say about the use of finger-prints:

"A finger-print is nature's signature. It has never been improved upon and never will be, and it is practically indestructible.

I believe it is the one infallible system of identification. It never changes from babyhood to the grave, and indeed it persists beyond the grave.

"Mummies of individuals who have been dead thousands of years have been unwrapped and the finger-prints still persist and can be taken."

Miss Hellner-Nielson is interested in the introduction of a universal system for every country and the establishment of a central bureau.

"The accomplishment of this will be of inestimable importance to women," she said recently. "In the first place, it would be a great protection against the kidnapping of children. It would also be a protection to women against a bigamist marriage, and would have an enormous effect in preventing fraud in the collection of insurance and numerous other crimes.

"I believe that the stigma which in some minds is placed upon finger-printing should be removed by education. You have your picture taken, and so does the criminal. Your picture is used in the newspapers, in magazines, and you like to see it. The criminal's picture is used to identify him. It would not be a bad thing if every one were finger-printed, and the statistics kept the same as are the vital statistics in the Bureau of Health or some similar board. There is no reason why you should object to having your finger-prints taken."

In Denmark directories of criminals are kept by the police. Each volume contains on the outer margin of the page the name of the criminal. Next to that, going toward the centre of the page, his birthday and year he was born. Then on the same line a series of figures, letters and fractions which look exactly like newspaper "pi," but each of which designates some line of the finger-print for identification. They have already registered more than 8,000 criminals in Denmark, and also the well-known criminals of Germany, France, England and Italy.

The particular outstanding feature which gives Denmark's records its great value is that these records may be sent by cable, wireless, telegraph or telephone. Formerly it was necessary to copy the finger-print and send that for identification, which consumed often many days, but now only an hour or so is necessary for the exact identification of any criminal whose record is in the directory.

Miss Hellner-Nielsen's directories, by the way, are called:

"The Dactological and Alphabetical Register of International Criminals, Compiled by the Bureau of Distant Identification."

In the United States more and more cities are establishing "Schools for Finger-printing." The task which most frequently confronts the American police is of a kind which requires great skill in the use of card indexes. Many times daily a card bearing the finger-prints of a man or woman who has either given no name at all or else is supposed of having given a false name is brought to an expert. The problem is, with only the finger-prints as a guide, to find the one card among the several hundred thousand record cards on file which may prove to bear identically the same finger-prints as those which appear on the inquiry card, and which will thus establish the true name and life history of the person referred for identification.

This is truly a difficult problem, but a solution has been found. The first requirement for the use of a finger-print catalogue is to determine the "primary classification" of the prints in question. This is done by tabulating the "patterns" which each finger-tip bears, whether a "whorl," a "loop," an "arch," or any other pattern listed under various technical names. To each of these patterns a certain fixed numerical value is assigned, so that the total value for the fingers of a right hand showing three whorls and two loops would be indicated by the number twenty-five, and for a left hand showing one whorl and five loops the number seven. By this formula—twenty-five over seven—the finger-print expert is guided to that section of his card catalogue which includes only prints of this same numerical count.

The next sub-division is infinitively more delicate. The expert's further choices depend upon the exact number of lines or

ridges which make up the finger-print pattern, the direction in which the lines flow, and the tiny characteristics of the lines. Intricate though it all is, the principles of the catalogue have been so skillfully established, however, that the average print can be found among 100,000 finger-prints quite as rapidly as any library book can be found.

Where the criminal deliberately plans his crime the use of finger-prints usually does not enter into the detection of the criminal. The deliberate criminal usually prepares not to leave any finger-prints. But in crimes of violence, where the crime is committed on the spur of the moment, the finger-print expert has been of tremendous value.

There is a disposition on the part of the courts to demand evidence in addition to finger-print evidence before convicting. Usually where the finger-print evidence is damaging the additional evidence is not difficult to obtain.

Contrary to the generally accepted view, dactyloscopy is an exact science, and to-day is playing a large and important part in the detection of crime and the protection of society.

BANK BANDITS SHOOT UP TOWN

THE mayor of Gallatin, Md., the town marshal and a hotel keeper were wounded, and the First National Bank was badly damaged, when bandits raided the town early the other day and escaped with $4,000 after cutting lines of communication.

Six men, believed to be from the Kansas City underworld, perpetrated the sensational raid.

They were discovered at work on the vault of the First National Bank at 4 o'clock that morning by Marshal John Chamberlain. A brief tussle ensued, in which Chamberlain was captured. The raiders then proceeded with their work.

Explosives were set before the vault and fuses touched off. Two tremendous shocks that awakened the entire town resulted. Clouds of smoke rolled from the bank as furniture and fixtures were hurled in all directions, partitions reduced to kindling and windows blown out. The heavy safe parted like a cardboard box.

Stunned by the unexpectedly heavy blast, the bandits forgot their captive—Chamberlain. He opened fire.

After a brief exchange of shots Chamberlain fell seriously wounded, his head and back torn by a shotgun charge.

Five of the raiders rushed to the street to stand off the scores of citizens who were running to the scene, while the sixth member of the bandits explored the ruins of the wrecked bank for the $30,000 in cash usually kept on hand.

Mayor Joseph Tate, the first to arrive, was immediately felled with a volley of shotgun slugs.

Frank Woodruff, owner of the Woodruff Hotel, attempted to reach Tate's body and drag him to safety. A second volley and Woodruff lay beside Tate.

Other citizens feared to advance, holding back in the darkness behind the dead line. Whenever one ventured across he was greeted with shots from five guns.

The desperate citizens then decided on a mass rush. The bank robbers met the advance with a counter offensive, shooting their way through to an automobile across the street.

Shorn of his defense, the man who was searching the bank ruins was forced to flee with his comrades when he had discovered only $4,000 of the sought-for $30,000.

According to Order

by Edward Condlon

MRS. RONALD HADLEY jangled the telephone in her study nervously.

"Central—central, why don't you answer!"

She worked the offending instrument rapidly. Finally a sleepy operator answered in a far-away voice, "Number pl-ease."

"Give me police headquarters at once!" exclaimed Mrs. Hadley tensely.

After a moment a gruff voice answered:

"Headquarters."

"Give me the detective bureau," said Mrs. Hadley, restraining herself with difficulty.

"Detective bureau, Captain Nasson speaking," came another voice over the wire.

"This is Mrs. Ronald Hadley, of 32 Livingston Court."

"Yes, I'm the widow of the late Judge Hadley. I want you to send one of your men up immediately. Do you hear? Immediately! There's some one trying to break into this house—trying for the last two days. Perhaps is in the house already. I don't know. But I do know none of the servants want to stay here with a prowler about."

"What is it? Yes. Oh, you will send one of your men immediately?"

Mrs. Ronald Hadley hung up the receiver in evident relief.

There was a tap at her door.

She started.

"Who is it?" she called.

"Your chocolate, mum," came from the other side of the panel, and her maid, bearing a tray, stepped into the room and closed the door behind her.

Mrs. Hadley drank the cup of chocolate with satisfaction. She liked chocolate before an adventure. Had she known what excitement was in store for her household that evening she probably would have ordered a pot of chocolate.

"You may go, Kathleen," said Mrs. Hadley. "If I want you I will ring. I'm going down to the library to read. You may tell Parker I've phoned for a detective, so that we may now all feel safer."

The buxom maid started to comply with the request in evident agitation. At the door she stopped hesitatingly as though she would ask a question. But with the words half formed on her lips she turned quickly on her heel and passed down the long hallway.

As soon as she had gone Mrs. Hadley sunk into a chair weakly. She was more

perturbed about the matter than she cared to admit to Kathleen.

Presently she descended to the library.

She touched a button, and Parker—tall, stately—arrived in answer to the summons.

"Have all the doors and windows been securely fastened?" she asked.

"Yes, m'lady," Parker nodded positively.

"Good! And where are Wilkenson and Marto?"

"Wilkenson is mending a chair in the basement and Marto is wiping knives in the kitchen. Do you want either of them, m'lady?"

"No, I just wanted to know where they were, that is all. Now, Parker, tell me again what it was you thought you saw at the window."

Parker drew himself up. He opened his mouth once or twice before any sound came.

"It was like this," he began, cocking his head on one side. "I thought I'd give a little water to one of the plants in the conservatory I missed this morning. I had just finished watering it when somehow I felt I wasn't alone. I turned around quick and saw a man's face at the window—the one that gives out on the west path. He was studying the window fastenings and the different exits, and at first didn't seem to notice me."

"What did he look like?" persisted Mrs. Hadley.

"That I can't say exactly," Parker answered. "I just caught a glimpse of his face. It was a foreign, hard-looking face. As soon as he saw me he ducked out of sight. I ran to the window, but he was too quick for me and was gone."

"Very well, Parker," concluded Mrs. Hadley. "You may go now. The detective from headquarters will be here any minute now, so be prepared to admit him. However, make sure that it is he before opening the door."

Parker bowed and left the room.

After ten or fifteen minutes the front-door bell pealed. She heard a murmur of voices, then some one being escorted down the hallway to the library.

"Mr. Quinn, from headquarters," announced Parker stiffly.

The detective entered the room leisurely. He was a short man, shorter than the usual conception of a detective. He was rather dark of skin, with sharp features. His eyes were continually roving. Even when talking to any one his furtive glance did not confine itself to the person to whom he conversed. He wore a small mustache which he was forever pulling.

"Your man here wanted to cross-examine me at the door," he said bluntly.

Mrs. Hadley rose composedly.

"I issued instructions for the exercise of caution," she said simply. "You see we have been so troubled by somebody trying to break into the house——"

"How long ago is it since you first suspected something was wrong?" he interrupted.

"Since the day before yesterday," Mrs. Hadley answered.

"What have you got in the house to attract burglars? Any valuables or important papers?"

Mrs. Hadley glanced at the servants.

Detective Quinn interpreted the glance. "Have 'em leave, if you don't mind," he said with a jerk of his thumb.

At a word from Mrs. Hadley Kathleen and Parker went out. But they left ill-humoredly. It was not every day that they got a close-up of a real detective.

"Now," began Quinn brusquely.

"Doubtless you know of my husband's death?" began Mrs. Hadley.

The detective nodded.

"Well," she continued, "I received a large sum of money late this afternoon, the insurance money. It was too late to go to the bank with it, so I secreted it here in the house. It was to have come the day before yesterday. I think some one knew of it and planned to get it at any cost."

Quinn's eyes narrowed. He stroked his chin meditatively.

"How many people are there in the house?" was the next question.

"My maid Kathleen, Parker, the butler whom you saw, and Wilkenson, the foot-

man, who also acts as a general all-around man, and Marto, the chef."

"Did any one see the intruder?"

"Yes. Kathleen saw a figure scurrying across the lawn once, and later claims she saw a face at the window in this very room. Parker says he saw a face peering in at one of the conservatory windows."

"I'll have to have your servants in this room a moment. I want to look over the lineup to see who's who. The prowler may have a confederate here."

Mrs. Hadley stepped to the house phone on the wall and communicated with each one of the servants. A moment later they stood in the library, ill at ease.

"This is Detective Quinn from headquarters," announced Mrs. Hadley. "He wants to ask you a few questions."

Quinn cleared his throat. His gaze rested on Kathleen.

"How long have you worked here?" he asked the maid, bringing his beady black eyes full upon her.

"E-leven years," Kathleen answered.

"What do you do with your money?" he asked her sharply.

She looked bewildered for an instant, then answered:

"I send it to my old mother who lives upstate."

"Is she sick?" persisted Quinn.

"Well, no," replied the maid after some hesitation. "She's feeling poorly, and I'm a-going to have her sent to the hospital."

"Ah!" exclaimed the detective, turning to Mrs. Hadley. "Here's one of your servants in need of money."

Mrs. Hadley shook her head unbelievingly. "No use to ask Parker those same questions either," she said. "Parker has been with me for seven years and contributes regularly to the support of his aged parents in England."

"I'm not casting any reflections," the detective answered shortly, "but I must have the facts in the case."

"Do you carry a revolver?" he asked Parker.

Parker shook his head.

"Ever employed in a house where a robbery occurred?" Quinn continued.

Parker started. He tried to speak, gulped, then finally pressed his lips tight and waited for the words to form themselves.

The detective's eyes took on a steely glint as he watched Parker's embarrassment. Even Mrs. Hadley could not help but notice the confusion that the question had caused her butler.

"I was employed at a house where a robbery was committed," he said slowly. "But the police, although they never caught the thief, were sure that none of the servants were mixed up in it."

Quinn passed on to Wilkenson. He appraised him with a glance; a strong, well-knit fellow, one who could give a good account of himself in a rough-and-tumble fight despite his mild demeanor about the house.

"How long have you been here?" he asked Wilkenson.

"Two weeks," replied the latter.

Quinn looked askance at Mrs. Hadley.

"He came well recommended from a friend of mine," she interposed quickly.

The detective tossed his head impatiently.

Certainly there was little to be gained by trying to cross-examine the servants with Mrs. Hadley present. She wanted to get at the bottom of the mystery, but she was unwilling to admit that any of her carefully chosen servants were at all concerned.

Quinn next turned his gaze at Pietro Marto. The cook stood nervously twisting his apron. He was a swarthy-skinned Sicilian. His dark eyes at times seemed to glow as if somewhere in their depths were hidden coals of fire. Had he always been a cook? Perhaps not. Over his left ear was the unmistakable scar of a knife wound. Who knows, perhaps Pietro could tell of some strange deeds in which he had taken part along the shores of the Mediterranean.

"How long have you been in this country?" the detective asked.

Pietro shifted his weight to the other foot.

"Five years," he answered shortly.

"Married?" interrogated Quinn.

There was a pause.

"No," returned the cook, his eyes on the floor.

"How long in this place?" was the next question.

Pietro glanced at Mrs. Hadley for assistance.

"He has been with me about a year," Mrs. Hadley supplied.

"Have you a revolver, a knife?" asked Quinn.

For the first time the Sicilian smiled. It was an indulgent smile. After all, he thought, how stupid the police are!

"No," he replied, but the detective knew better; his look was inscrutable.

As soon as the two were left alone in the library Quinn moved nearer the table at which Mrs. Hadley was seated.

"Now you told me that you had quite a large sum of money concealed in the house," he began.

She nodded assent.

"We've got to keep a sharp lookout," said the detective, striking his fist in the palm of his hand. "The layout is a little queer, it seems to me. Where have you got the money hidden?"

Mrs. Hadley glanced apprehensively toward the doors to make sure that there were no eavesdroppers.

"It's in the bookcase—the section just under the window."

Quinn immediately went to the window and examined the fastenings. He opened the window, closed it again, and spent some time making a critical survey of the catch.

"I have it doped out," he told Mrs. Hadley. "Call in the two flunkeys, if you don't mind."

She touched a bell and Parker and Wilkenson appeared.

"Now," said the detective, "I think we can clear up this mystery in a very few minutes. Mrs. Hadley, I want you to assist us. All you will have to do is to snap the lights of this room on and off like this."

The detective stepped to the electric button at the side of the room and snapped the lights off for a second and then on again.

Mrs. Hadley and the servants eyed him wonderingly.

He smiled complacently as he slowly walked to the centre of the room.

"You see," he exclaimed, "the thing is so simple that——"

But Detective Quinn never finished that sentence.

From somewhere in the general direction of the kitchen came the unmistakable sounds of a terrific struggle. Chairs were crashed over and a table was overturned. There was a rending smash of crockery. The battle was taking place in the kitchen.

The little group in the library started for an instant as if petrified.

Down from the regions above came a woman's shriek. It was Kathleen. Here evidently was an alibi. The maid certainly was not taking part in the struggle.

Above the din of the conflict in the kitchen came the wild scream of a man in agony. It was a scream that meant something more than just physical agony. That scream spelled supernatural terror.

Then all was still.

Quinn made a lunge for the door, but tripped on the carpet and sprawled on the floor. With the aid of the footman he picked himself up and led the way, revolver in hand, to the kitchen. They were followed by the intrepid Mrs. Hadley.

The sight that met their gaze was sickening.

Pietro Marto lay stretched out on the floor in the midst of half-demolished furniture and dishes, a stiletto through his heart.

The door to the conservatory was open. One of the windows in the palm room had been jimmied.

Quinn stooped beside the fallen Sicilian. He removed the blade from the breast. Pietro Marto was dead!

Covering the body of the dead man with a sheet, Quinn ordered a thorough search of the grounds. The house was scoured from top to bottom, but not a trace of the assassin could be found.

Finally they reassembled in the library.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Quinn," said Mrs. Hadley, "I tried to call the coroner."

Quinn, who was regarding the bookcase immediately under the window, turned, startled.

"But I found that the wires were cut," she added.

"Oh!" exclaimed the detective, visibly relieved. "You see, unless I catch the murderer before the coroner arrives it counts as a black mark against me at headquarters. First, for having a murder occur when I'm actually on a case, and, second, for not capturing the guilty party. However, I think I'll take a run down to the drug-store on the corner and phone my chief what has happened."

"Meanwhile," he continued, addressing himself to Parker and Wilkenson, "turn off all the lights on the lower floor as if everybodly in the house had retired for the night. Then, conceal yourselves in the conservatory. If any one comes, shoot, and shoot to kill. You are dealing with a desperate man. When I return I will come to the front door and knock to be let in."

A few minutes later the detective quitted the house. Mrs. Hadley went upstairs to her boudoir, where she tried to compose her own nerves and those of her maid.

Parker and Wilkenson stationed themselves in the conservatory.

Several minutes elapsed, then came a tap at the front door.

Parker went to the front entrance. He opened the door and found himself looking into the muzzle of a six-shooter.

And the man behind the gun was not the detective.

"Put up your hands!" commanded the stranger in a low voice.

Parker obeyed silently.

"Who else is in the house?" came from the newcomer.

"The missus and her maid," answered Parker.

"Come on, now," roughly demanded the other. "Who else, or——" and he moved the gun threateningly.

"Winkenson, the footman," admitted Parker, "and that's all. Pietro the cook was just killed a few minutes ago in the kitchen.

"Where's the fellow with the mustache?" insisted the stranger.

"Detective Quinn? Why he left a few minutes ago—to phone headquarters, I think. But he'll be back," answered the frightened butler.

"Humph!" was the only comment the intruder made as he stepped into the hallway.

"Keep 'em up," he commanded, searching Parker with a few deft strokes to see if he carried a weapon.

The two marched into the library. Parker looked at the man curiously. He was heavy-set, aggressive, and spoke with a commanding air. From the way his clothing was disarranged, he had evidently participated in a rough-and-tumble fight very recently. Parker's eyes opened wide.

Here before him undoubtedly was the murderer of the cook. Parker sat gingerly on the edge of a chair.

"Call in the footman!" the intruder commanded. "And, mind, don't try any foolishness and try to warn him or I'll pop you."

Parker touched a bell obediently.

A moment later Wilkenson walked into the trap. Coming into the room a revolver leveled at him by a businesslike desperado met his startled gaze. Like Parker, he was forced to hold his hands aloft. Next he was made to sit next to Parker on the settee on the opposite side of the room from the door. The man with the gun stood between them and that exit.

"When did the gent with the mustache say he'd be back?" came from the man with the gun.

The stranger regarded the two servants intently. Parker gulped and tried to speak. Wilkenson seemed to have difficulty with his tongue.

Then it occurred to the intruder that they were looking at something behind him. He turned in a flash and looked into the black muzzle of a pistol. Mrs. Hadley had drawn a bead on him, and her finger was on the trigger.

Without a moment's hesitation the man's hands shot up into the air and his revolver fell to the floor.

"Don't shoot, for Gawd's sake! My gun isn't loaded," he cried.

Mrs. Hadley did not have to order Parker and Wilkenson to tie up the prisoner. The two fell upon the trapped burglar with a ferocity that quite overwhelmed him. He

seemed weak from his previous tussle. He tried violently to expostulate, but a gag clapped over his mouth quickly put an end to this.

For an hour the company sat awaiting the return of the detective.

Kathleen ventured to tiptoe downstairs to the door of the room to learn the cause of the commotion.

Catching sight of the prisoner lying bound and gagged in the middle of the floor, she stifled a shriek and fled upstairs.

"Well, I think I will retire, too," remarked Mrs. Hadley. "Parker, you and Wilkenson can take turns guarding until Mr. Quinn returns. He has probably gone for the reserves, not knowing that we have the prisoner all ready for him."

Mrs. Hadley left the room and the two servants were alone with their prisoner.

"You may turn in for a while, Wilkenson," said Parker, "and I'll stand guard. But mind you, don't sleep too long. I'm a little sleepy myself."

For some minutes Parker amused himself by looking at the prostrate figure of the burglar. The face was not a hard one, and yet he seemed to be a man of the world, one who looked as if he might have exchanged blows with gangsters anywhere from Marseilles to Cork. The man appeared to be sleeping.

Parker continued his vigil manfully, but soon he fell to counting the books on the shelves. That was too much like counting sleep, and in a few minutes the harassed butler had dozed off. A moment later he lay back in his chair and snored.

At the first sound the captive raised his head. Then, cautiously, he raised himself to a sitting posture. He winced several times. The thongs at his wrists were cutting the flesh.

He looked down at his hands and smiled. The two servants were evidently novices at tying a man up. They had tied his hands in front of him.

His gaze wandered about the room. On the table lay a paper-knife. It did not look sharp, but he edged his way toward it, slowly but silently. By raising his bound hands he was able to remove the blade from the table. Taking it between his teeth, he sawed away valiantly at his bonds. Slowly but surely the cords parted. A moment more and the gag was from his mouth.

He stood up, free.

Stealthily he tiptoed to Parker's chair, A quick movement, and he secured possession of the pistol. Parker wakened only to feel the cold muzle of Mrs. Hadley's revolver against his temple.

It was the work of a very few minutes for the intruder's deft fingers to truss up and gag Parker securely.

Instead of going in search of Wilkenson, whom he knew to be somewhere about the house, the intruder did a most unexpected thing. He switched off the lights, then he took up a position near the window.

The house remained still for perhaps a period of about fifteen minutes. Then there came a scratching noise on the outside of the window-sill.

Somebody was trying to jimmy the window.

The intruder made no move to interfere. Neither did he offer to aid the person on the outside. Instead he crouched silently beside the window, keeping well out of the way of the moonlight that trickled through the shutters.

The scratching continued. Presently the window swung open, revealing a man whose face was almost completely covered by a black mask. The masked man climbed cautiously through the window. Then he began to fumble in the bookcase immediately under the window. He was bent on securing something.

The former prisoner watched him for a moment. Then, raising his gun aloft, he brought the butt crashing down upon the head of the masked man. The latter wilted.

The noise brought Wilkenson. He snapped on the lights. He was taken aback when he faced the man whom he supposed to still be a prisoner.

"Ring for your mistress," growled the intruder, "and untie that loon of a butler. I can't stay here all night."

Wilkenson obeyed quickly, hoping for a

chance to catch the other off his guard, but no such opportunity came.

The masked man on the floor still lay motionless when Mrs. Hadley entered the library.

She gasped as she took in the situation.

"Mrs. Hadley," said the man with the gun, speaking for the first time in kindly tones, "your servants are not used to late hours, and they get very sleepy. Now a man in my line of work has to be ready for all emergencies. Before we go any further let me explain."

"Yes, I think you had better do some explaining," averred Mrs. Hadley.

"The man at my feet is not dead. I merely stunned him. He, by the way, is one of the band who murdered the Sicilian, your cook." He shifted his gun to the other hand and looked savagely at the prostrate figure.

"I couldn't get here any sooner," he continued, "and I couldn't prevent the crime. Five years ago your cook was a member of a Camorra band in Naples. How do I know? Well, that's my business, and what my business is I'll reveal later."

"Your cook——" he continued.

"Pietro Marto," supplied Mrs. Hadley.

"Oh, yes, Pietro Marto," the man with the gun mused. "Marto and several companions in Naples wanted to come to America, but they didn't have enough money to satisfy the Ellis Island authorities. So it was decided that Marto should come on ahead and send back the money after he had been passed into this country. Once in and Marto ducked out of sight.

"Then," he continued, "Marto laid low for about a year. Then his dupes in Naples got wind of his whereabouts and put the local members of the Camorra on his trail. They picked up the scent and found him working in a Houston street macaroni factory. He ran for his life, not even waiting for his hat. That was about a year ago."

Mrs. Hadley nodded understandingly. "So that was why he told me he lost all his clothing in a fire."

"Finally," went on the intruder, "Marto was traced here by the band. This man at my feet was the leader. Although they came to-night to kill Marto, they didn't know about the money."

"Money!" gasped Mrs. Hadley. "How did you know there was any sum in the house? Does everybody in town know it?"

The stranger laughed.

"The reason your phone won't work," he said, "is that somebody listened in on the wires when you called up headquarters. Then the wires were cut. No, don't look at me. I didn't do it. You see, I figured that as Marto was done for our veiled friend here would be back after the money when the coast was clear. I timed his return to a minute, it seems."

The masked man on the floor stirred slightly.

"I guess he's coming to," remarked the stranger. "Step up, ladies and gentlemen, and I'll unmask the brains of the Camorra."

Mrs. Hadley, followed by Parker and Wilkenson, gathered around. The stranger with a twist removed the black mask from the prostrate man's face.

"Detective Quinn!" cried Mrs. Hadley, shrinking back.

"Now, who are you?" she demanded, facing the man with the gun.

The other made a wry face.

"Why, my name is Quinn," he explained, "Patrick Quinn. I'm from headquarters, you know. This gent is no relation of mine. In fact, his name is Anthony De-Scoria, alias Tony the blood. He packs a nasty stiletto,

"Y'see, I came up from headquarters when we got your call, but this knifer and his gang were laying for me in the trees. They had tapped the wires and knew just when to expect me. I was tied hand and foot in the back of the garage across the street with the gang to keep me company while they waited word from Tony here, who walked in on you large as life."

Mrs. Hadley could do nothing but blink.

"One thing, though, this bunch of Camorrists overlooked the fact that I always carry a penknife in my shoe for just such emergencies. I got away while the killing was going on, taking my gun, which they chucked away empty. Old buttons here didn't know the difference."

Parker looked sheepish.

There was a sound of heavy footsteps at the front entrance. The doorbell then pealed loudly three times in quick succession.

"That's the chief," said Quinn. "I know his ring."

Captain Nasson, chief of the detective bureau, was ushered in. His eyes lighted up when he espied Tony.

"We've collared the whole bunch," he said grimly. "I was afraid this bird would get away. You had the right hunch, after all, Quinn. The greed for money kept him from making a safe getaway."

Captain Nasson turned to Mrs. Hadley. "Pretty slippery customer this," he said, indicating Tony. "I understand from the gang that he even used the lights here for a signal that the coast was clear to get the cook."

"Get up, you," commanded Quinn, shaking the fallen man by the shoulder. "These bracelets will look well on you. I found them down the path where you used that nasty lead pipe."

Tony regained consciousness with an effort. Then he meekly obeyed Quinn. The law held no terrors for him—he had acted according to orders.

BRITISH CONVICTS HAVE EASIER LIFE

PRISON reform in England lags far behind what has been accomplished in America, but even so it has made such progress that some critics are declaring too much is being done in the direction of making things easy and comfortable for convicts.

In their annual report the commissioners of prisons have foreseen this charge and have answered it. "It is our duty," they say, "as the custodians of those who are for a time forcibly separated from life in the civic community, to restore them to it at least as fit as when we received them. To this end we should feed and exercise their minds as well as their bodies, else we shall restore them to the stern competition of life outside quite unfitted to take their part in it."

Within the last twelve months changes have been effected in the treatment of convicts that would have been regarded as revolutionary a few years ago. These are all in the direction of recognizing that even convicts are human beings and that the punishment of the inmates is not the primary object of prisons.

The broad arrow, everywhere known as the badge of the convict, no longer appears on prison garments. They have now no distinctive markings. Neither is it insisted on any longer that the hair of convicts be clipped close to the scalp. The rules prohibiting conversation between prisoners while at work have been greatly relaxed. Convicts are no longer required to receive their visitors from the outside world behind bars or wire netting.

Concerts, plays and lectures are to-day given in many jails. Convicts, by good conduct, may earn the privilege of smoking at times. Stern disciplinarians of the old school would have regarded such indulgences as utterly subversive of everything for which prisons have been instituted in civilized communities. But the reports of prison governors and chaplains show that smoking may be one of the most effective means of restoring a prisoner's self-respect.

The report of the commissioners notes that the return to prison of persons previously convicted is greater among women than among men, the percentage being 80 and 57 respectively.

The Paper Clue

By WARREN W. VAN GORDEN

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

MATT GILMORE, head of the Gilmore Detective Agency, laid down the letter he had been reading with a frown of displeasure upon his face.

Opening up a box of cigars that sat within reach upon the top of the desk, he selected one with care, bit off the end and, setting his teeth into the weed, arose and started pacing up and down the room.

As he walked back and forth chewing upon the unlighted cigar, his face suddenly cleared and he muttered:

"I'll send Burke. He's the man for that job."

Stepping to the desk, he pressed a button. Almost instantly the door opened and a young man wearing large horn-rimmed glasses entered the room.

"Has Burke reported in this morning?" came from Gilmore in clear, crisp tones.

"Yes, he arrived ten minutes ago, sir," replied the man.

"Good. Send him in, and, by the way, Williams, get in the files and let me have the records of 'Smiling Nell' and the man known as 'Smooth Al.' There are rewards out for both."

As the secretary left the room Matt turned again to the letter he had been pursuing.

Gilmore looked up as the door opened, and a young man in the early thirties entered.

"You want to see me?" he asked as he approached the desk before which his chief was sitting.

"Good-morning, Burke. Yes, I want to talk to you. Better find a chair."

As the young man seated himself Gilmore leaned forward and looked into the eyes of the young detective and asked:

"Feel as if you'd like to tackle another big job?"

"Lead me to it. I was about ready to die of inertia."

"Well," said Gilmore with a smile, "I have here a communication that is of particular interest." He picked up the letter that lay before him. "Did you ever hear of Scott-Burton & Co.?"

"Of course. It's one of the largest department stores in the city. What's wrong up there?"

"Big robbery, or rather I should say robberies," spoke up Gilmore. "It seems that they have been systematically robbed for a period covering several months. Merchandise, not money!" he exclaimed as he saw Burke about to speak.

"It looks to me like it would be a case for their store detective instead of an operative from this agency," remarked Burke.

"Yes, so it would appear on the surface, but these robberies are not petty thieving."

"What do you mean?" asked Burke, somewhat interested.

"It seems," went on the chief, "that large amounts of valuable merchandise such as silks, furs and even articles of wearing apparel are mysteriously removed from the premises, leaving not a clue to show the manner in which the robbery was accomplished."

"How about their store detective?" enquired Burke, now deeply attentive.

"Well," remarked Gilmore dryly, "he has tried for about two months to get a line on the mystery. In the meantime the firm has asked for one of our best operatives to take charge of the case, and sent along a liberal

retaining fee. That's about all I can tell you, so you will have to get the rest of the dope after you get on the ground."

"All I have to say is that I had better get a-going," said Burke as he made ready to leave.

"Stop on your way out and ask Williams if he has those records of 'Smiling Nell' and 'Smooth Al' ready for you. While you are getting the reports I will get a letter ready for you to Mr. Freeze, the general manager. It may save you a little trouble."

Emerging into the outer office, Burke approached Williams, who was busy pounding away on a typewriter.

"The chief told me to get 'Smiling Nell' and 'Smooth Al,'" remarked Burke with a wry smile as he leaned carelessly against the desk.

"All here. Just one minute," answered Williams as he jerked the sheet of paper from the machine. "That's a pretty complete description and record of those two birds. You can no doubt get a slant at their mugs at police headquarters."

"Thanks. What you have will do very nicely for the present," cut in Burke as he folded up the reports and placed them in an inside pocket of his coat.

"Here's the letter, and good luck to you," broke in the voice of the chief. He had softly entered the room and stood with the letter in his hand.

As Burke took the envelope and turned to go, he noticed the chief's eyes upon him with a strange quizzical look in their mild depths.

He paused, but Gilmore had turned away and was talking to Williams in low, measured tones. Jamming his hat upon his head, he closed the door behind him.

Arriving on the street, Burke turned to the left and caught a surface car bound uptown. Leaving the car at Forty-third street, he found himself directly in front of Scott-Burton & Co.'s big department store. The detective noted that the store covered a full city block.

"Well, here goes, and I sure hope this case turns out to be more exciting than the last one," he muttered.

CHAPTER TWO

DIVING into a doorway, Burke made his way down the aisle to the elevators which he saw in the rear. A tall man wearing a blue uniform and with a cap on his head bearing the word "Starter" was walking back and forth, directing the hurrying throngs into the elevators as they stopped from time to time.

Walking up to the man, the detective asked:

"Where will I find the office of the general manager?"

"Fifth floor, sir. Take this car," and he ushered Burke into an elevator which was rapidly filling with feminine humanity.

The car started smoothly, and the uniformed elevator girl called out monotonously the merchandise to be found on each floor.

Stepping out on the fifth floor, the detective walked quickly toward the offices. At a window marked "Information" a girl with bright red hair was busily engaged powdering her nose.

After waiting for several minutes Burke became impatient and, rapping sharply on the counter, asked:

"Is Mr. Freeze in his office?"

"Yes, he's in, but very busy," replied the girl impertinently. "What's the nature of your business?"

A trifle nettled, Burke drew from his pocket the letter his chief had given him. He handed it to the girl, saying: "Please take this letter to Mr. Freeze at once. I think that he will see me."

With a toss of her head the girl disappaered into an inner room. She returned almost immediately, saying:

"You are to go in. Right this way," and the detective was shown into the general manager's office.

A short apopletic-looking man arose from his chair and advanced with outstretched hand.

"Burke is my name," said the detective as they shook hands.

"I'm mighty glad to see you," declared Mr. Freeze as he motioned Burke to a chair.

The general manager seated himself and continued: "This case has come to the point where it's a pretty serious matter, and it's high time that something be done."

"How does it happen that you have allowed so much time to elapse before calling us in? As I understand it, these robberies have been going on for a matter of several months."

"It's like this," exclaimed the general manager with a wave of his hand. "We have a store detective who has been working on the case. Several times we have been on the point of calling in outside help, but each time O'Flannagan has begged for more time. As we had a lot of confidence in his ability, we acceded to his request."

"Then he is ready to give up now," cut in Burke.

"Yes, I think that he has come to look at the proposition in a different light, and will no doubt be as glad as we are to have you take over the case."

"His time must be well taken up with everyday routine work in the store."

"There seems to be an epidemic of shoplifting at the present time. If he takes care of that end of it he will be doing well," declared Mr. Freeze.

"How about the night watchmen?"

"O'Flannagan has checked up on them. He thinks that the stuff is removed during the day."

"Wouldn't it be an easy matter for dishonest help to remove the goods on leaving the building at noon or at night?"

"No, Mr. Burke. It would not! Any packages, suitcases or the like brought into the store must be O.K.-ed by a floor walker. They are then sent to the delivery desk. Goods purchased by the help are also sent to the desk. At the employees' exit the packages are again inspected and checked out."

"Not much chance of getting away with anything big when you have a system like that," interjected Burke.

"Not much, that's true," the general manager admitted.

"You haven't any theory, then?" Burke asked

"No. We have gone over the ground from every angle, and the manner in which the goods are removed is a complete mystery. By careful checking we find that the amount of merchandise stolen from this store every day runs up into hundreds of dollars."

Burke scratched his head for a minute and then said: "In order to properly handle this affair, it would be best for me to work in some department as a regular employee. It wouldn't do for it to get around that a detective is working on the case. The thief would be on his guard at once."

"You're right there. We don't crave any publicity."

"There must be some department where I can work and still be able to roam about the store at will," suggested Burke.

"Let me see," mused the general manager. "Ah, I have it. We will place you in the display department. The display manager can use you on interior work and perhaps in the windows. He has quite a large staff, so the addition of another man, even at this time of the year, will not cause any comment."

"That's settled, then," remarked Burke with satisfaction.

"When are you going to start?"

"To-morrow morning will be time enough," answered Burke.

"To make everything regular you had better report at the employment office, where you will get your time card and instructions. I will fix things up there so they will expect you."

"I guess that's all, then," stated Burke, picking up his gloves and hat from the table.

"Do you want to talk things over with O'Flannagan before you start?"

"Not now. I'll look things over a bit first," decided Burke.

"Just as you please," said Mr. Burke, "and I'll say right now that I wish you lots of luck."

"Thanks," said Burke dryly. "By the looks of things I'll surely need it on this case."

CHAPTER THREE

ON the first floor Burke stood idly watching the endless stream of humanity that continually passed to and fro. He noted with interest that people from practically every walk in life were represented among the store's patrons.

"Is there something I can do for you?"

At the sound of the sweet voice the detective swung quickly around and looked into the deep blue eyes of as pretty a girl as he had ever seen.

A little thrill of pleasure ran through him as he stammered: "N—n—no. Y—yes." Then he laughed as the smiling face was turned towards him. "I didn't want anything. I was just looking." He hesitated, then added: "You might be able to help me out, though. Can you tell me where I could find the store detective."

The smile left the girl's face, and she eyed Burke with evident suspicion.

"Two aisles over to the front, I think," she answered, and turned away.

"Whew! Some peach! But she can sure freeze a person with a look like that. Wonder who she is? I believe that I've seen her before somewhere."

Seeing a floor walker bearing down upon him, Burke stopped him and asked:

"Can you tell me where I will find the store detective? I believe that he is on this floor somewhere."

Looking at Burke sharply, the floor man answered: "I guess it is Mr. O'Flannagan that you want. He just left this floor for the dress goods and silks."

"Thanks. I'll look for him there."

Burke was aware that the floor walker kept at a discreet distance behind him until he was safely into the elevator.

Arriving on the second floor, Burke found the immense space allotted to the silk and dress goods department crowded to overflowing. A full-page advertisement in the morning papers had obviously brought out the record-breaking crowd. Perspiring clerks hastened here and there in a fruitless endeavor to wait upon the impatient, seething mob. Down through the centre of the room were huge tables piled high with remnants. Here a mad scramble was in progress. Women trampled upon each other's feet, hats were knocked askew, while again and again an excited bargain seeker tore from another's hand a particularly choice bit of material.

Burke stood at one side watching the scene. Suddenly his attention was drawn by some irresistible force to a stout man with a heavy black mustache. He was carrying a big pile of brown-paper-wrapped bolts, which apparently were very heavy, for he stooped as he walked. Going behind the counter, he passed through a door which led behind the shelving.

Burke's curiosity was aroused. Stepping back of the counter, he looked through the doorway. The man with the mustache was just opening a small door in the side of the wall. Watching, Burke saw him push the bolts, one at a time, through the opening. After closing the door, he stood listening, then made his way back towards where Burke was standing.

Not wanting to be found eavesdropping, the detective dodged quickly back and came into collision with a girl who was just passing. Drawing away, Burke muttered an apology. In surprise he saw that it was the same girl with the blue eyes who had accosted him on the lower floor only a short time before. She eyed him with disfavor and passed on towards the bargain tables.

"I'm just inquisitive enough to want to see what is behind that door back of the partition," thought Burke. Seeing that the girl and the stout man were not looking his way, and keeping a sharp eye peeled for a floor walker, the detective found his way behind the partition and opened the door in the wall.

"Well, what do you know about that?" he muttered.

Carefully closing the panel, he was about to go when he noticed another door, which he had not seen before. After a hasty inspection he made his way out onto the floor. The girl and the stout man were nowhere to be seen.

"Not much chance of locating O'Flannagan here," he thought. "It would be just like trying to find a needle in a haystack. I

think I'll go to the office and find out where his hang-out is located."

"He's not in," said the girl in answer to Burke's inquiry for the store detective. "Just a moment and I'll put in a call for him on the automatic. You can wait in his office," and she pointed to a small room at one side.

A deep-toned bell began to ring: "One-two, one-two, one."

As he seated himself in O'Flannagan's tiny office the sound of voices came to him through the thin glass partition. Listening, he heard a squeaky little voice say:

"Was just down and checked out those bales of waste paper. It's queer, but during the last few months every checking shows thirty to forty more bales, and they weigh more, too. I would like to know where all the waste comes from?"

"Better tell the superintendent about it," came in reply in a loud gruff tone. "You know he's just bugs on cutting down expenses."

"I was down there last week," went on the squeaky voice, "and whether you'll believe it or not, that fool porter was actually baling up a bundle of perfectly good suit boxes."

"It will be a feather in your cap if you'll report such things to the big boss," the gruff voice said in reply.

Burke listened, hoping to hear more, but the men had evidently left the adjoining room.

A shadow darkened the doorway, and a burly man with a heavy black mustache entered the room.

Burke was astonished to find that he was the same man whom he had seen carrying the bolts of dress goods.

"Are you the store detective?" he asked, rising to his feet.

"I am! What can I do for you?" snapped O'Flannagan.

"Burke is my name. I'm from the Gilmore Agency."

"Well, what do you want from me?" came from O'Flannagan in unfriendly tones as he appeared not to notice the hand Burke had extended.

"Thought maybe you could give me some of the details in regards to the store robberies," observed Burke.

"Not on your life. You fellows come onto a job like this, which is entirely out of your line, and just crab the whole works for us regular detectives."

"You've been on the case for about three months with everything your own way. You haven't done anything yet. You ought to be glad to shift the responsibility onto other shoulders."

"You don't know it all," barked out O'Flannagan crossly.

"Maybe not," declared Burke, losing his temper. "I'll say this, though: If I had been on a case three months I'd have more than hot air to show for it, you can bet on that."

"Seeing you feel that way about it, I don't mind telling you that I've just as good as got my hands on the guilty parties right now. To show you that I'm game I'll tell you all I know about the case. It won't do you a bit of good, though. I have the thief just as good as jugged right now."

Briefly O'Flannagan explained the case, starting at the time when the store first began to miss the goods and ending with the assertion that he would have the criminals behind bars before many days had passed.

"I wouldn't be too sure about that if I were you," said Burke pointedly as he bade O'Flannagan good-by.

CHAPTER FOUR

A HALF-HOUR later Burke stood at the employees' exit watching the tired salespeople as they punched their numbers on the mamoth time-clocks.

A group of laughing girls came down the hall, and Burke observed amongst them the girl with the deep blue eyes whom fate had thrown in his way twice before that day.

"I must get acquainted with that girl some way," thought Burke. "Funny she acts so distant when she sees me. She was cordial enough until I mentioned the word detective. Guess I might as well call it a day and go home," he growled aloud.

Leaving the store, he walked to the subway entrance on the corner.

Descending the stairs, he seated himself in the waiting train. Happening to turn in his seat, he found sitting calmly beside him the girl who had so attracted him at the store. He made up his mind to speak to her.

"I beg your pardon, but are you not employed at the Scott-Burton store?"

The girl looked at him as if undecided whether to speak or not.

"You see, I start work there myself to-morrow morning," went on Burke with an engaging smile.

"In what department do you expect to work, Mr. ——?"

"Er—er—Burke. Chester Burke is my name."

The girl laughed and then said:

"My name is Edna Randall."

"Now that we're acquainted, may I ask how far you go?"

"I get out at Grove street. I live with my aunt on Elm, so you see I don't have far to go after leaving the subway."

Further conversation was out of the question, as the guard closed the door with a bang and the train was soon in motion.

As the train came to a stop at the Grove street station Miss Randall turned to Burke, saying:

"I'm so glad that you are going to be with us at the store."

"I'm glad, too," retorted Burke.

"Well, good-night, Mr. Burke. See you in the morning." She smiled sweetly and, turning away, was swallowed up in the crowd.

Reaching into his inside coat pocket, Burke drew out the typewritten reports he had received from Williams at the agency that morning. The report on "Smiling Nell" interested him at once. It read:

WANTED FOR ROBBERY

Helen Berry, alias May Mandall, alias Smiling Nell. Height, five feet five inches. Weight, about one hundred and fifteen pounds. Age, twenty-two. Light golden hair. Eyes, deep blue. Extremely good-looking and dresses in the height of fashion. Wanted in connection with the robbery of the Columbus Dry Goods Company at Columbus on November first, nineteen hundred and twenty-one. See bulletin attached for complete history.

Burke read carefully the attached bulletin. Suddenly a cold chill ran up his spine. His mind held a vision of the beautiful girl who had just left him. Like a flash it came to him that the description he had just read fitted the girl to perfection. "Oh pshaw!" snorted Burke, "what a ridiculous idea!" Then his mind went back to the report. "Helen Berry, alias May Mandall. Mandall!" he exclaimed under his breath. "Why, the girl said her name was Randall. H'm! I can't believe but what the similarity of names is a coincidence, and yet it looks bad for the girl. What in blazes was she doing in the silk department?" According to the report here, it was mostly silks that were stolen at the Columbus Dry Goods Co.

The hoarse voice of the guard aroused him from his meditations.

"Circle," he rasped. "Circle."

After a hearty supper at a restaurant near by Burke made his way to his room. The night being chilly, he made a fire in the grate. Going to a closet, he donned a worn smoking jacket and a pair of old felt slippers, and took up his pipe.

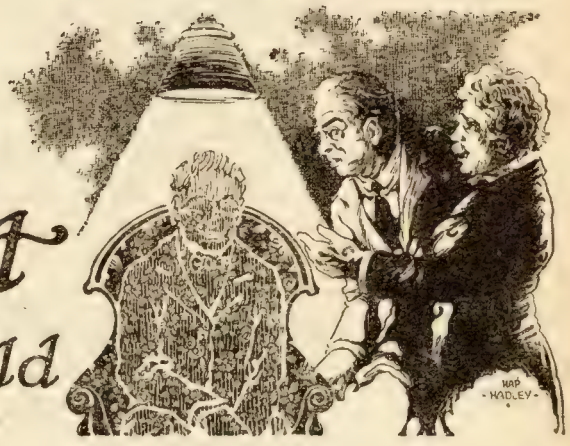
Seating himself in an easy-chair, he fell into a brown study. "One thing that bothers me is the attitude of that man O'Flannagan. He is distinctly antagonistic towards the efforts of an outsider to clear up the case. Why? He must be going to try some kind of a bluff on me. He knows more than he'll admit. And the girl. Confound the luck! I hope she isn't mixed up in the case, but it sure looks that way now."

He smoked pipe after pipe as his mind went over every detail of the case. "I must look into O'Flannagan's history the first thing. Then I'll have something to work on," he decided at last. "I'll get a line on things to-morrow."

(*To be continued in next issue*)

In the Green Light

by W. W. Hatfield



"THE hand was transparent, you say. And Milford claims that it moved rapidly, although there was no arm, no body to be seen. Was there any other striking peculiarity about it?"

Doctor Rushkin leaned forward as he asked the question, his lean, strong fingers gripping the arms of his chair. In his face the wrinkles of anxiety mingled with the furrows of his seventy years, while his gray eyes, quite the color of his bushy hair and eyebrows, narrowed with excitement. Evidently he considered the query of vast importance.

"Yes, it was green. And there was a wart on the forefinger—a large wart."

Inspector Craighead chose his words carefully. He was the kind of a man who would always do that. It showed in his heavy features, which might have been those of a Sphinx or a poker player. To the careful consideration of details he owed his living and a modest degree of renown.

"Ah, it was the right hand, then!" Doctor Rushkin's gaunt frame relaxed. He settled back with an air of relief.

"Yes, it was a right hand." A slight twitch of the long, black, unlit cigar between Inspector Craighead's teeth was the only indication of his surprise. "How did you know?"

"Green, transparent hands," said Doctor Rushkin grimly, "hands that may be seen floating in the air without arms are not common. But I have reasons to suspect that two such hands exist, and that one of them, a right hand, has a large wart on the forefinger. Perhaps when you have told me your story I may tell you my reasons."

Inspector Craighead ran his fingers through his mop of uncombed, sandy hair. By this you might have told that he was puzzled, although you could not have seen it in his features. During his twenty years of service at the Woodburn National Bank no one had ever seen the inspector so thoroughly puzzled. Not infrequently he carried some of his knottier problems to his friend Doctor Rushkin, but never had he felt so helpless as now. He hesitated, for the story he was about to tell to the grizzled old scientist was not one to court the belief of a hard-headed, reasoning man.

"The robbery," he began, "occurred at ten o'clock this morning. Milford, the teller, had just finished making up the payroll for the E. T. & L., amounting to thirty thousand dollars. He placed the package

of currency on his desk, directly under his desk lamp, and turned to the window to cash a check for a customer. While thus engaged he saw, or thought he saw, out of the corner of his eye a hand grasp the package and lift it from the desk. He turned immediately. The hand had disappeared, but the package was suspended in the air, floating toward the door of his cage. He was so astounded that he made no attempt to intercept it. In some unaccountable way the cage door swung open. Milford swears that no human being touched it. By the time he had recovered enough of his wits to give an alarm the door had shut and the package was drifting in mid-air down the corridor in the rear of the cages. Here it was encountered by one of the girl clerks, who screamed and fainted, bringing on a general panic, during which the package floated around the corner of the cages and out into the lobby among the patrons. Several women depositors who saw it grew hysterical. Several men swore in a dazed and automatic fashion. No one attempted to stop it, not even the guard, who always stands at the front door. It sailed over the sidewalk and dropped into the front seat of a big, black touring car that stood at the curb. It was at that moment that I arrived on the scene. I saw the package drop into the seat. I heard the engine roar and saw the auto leap into the street. I heard the blare of a horn and the grind of shifting gears. The thing tore down the street as if driven by a maniac."

Inspector Craighead paused impressively, with the air of one who wishes to lend dramatic weight to an impending climax.

Doctor Rushkin was again leaning forward in his chair, his bony fingers clutching the arms convulsively.

"The driver?" he snapped. "Did you see him?"

"There was no driver," declared Inspector Craighead, emphasizing each word with a stab of his unlit cigar. "Except for the package of money that car was unoccupied. I swear it was unoccupied, and I am not subject to hysterics."

Doctor Rushkin settled back in his chair again with an obvious air of relief.

"And yet, my friend," he said slowly, "I tell you that it was occupied. Automobiles cannot run themselves. There was a hand on that wheel, I tell you—a transparent hand, with a large wart on the forefinger."

"And green?"

"Not necessarily. Color is a property entirely distinct from matter, depending altogether upon the effect of light of different wave lengths on the retina. Your hand, for instance, is white. So is mine. Here is a book with a red binding. There is a brown chair. Now watch closely."

Doctor Rushkin pressed a button, throwing the room into darkness. He pressed another, and a strong, green light streamed upon them, lending its ghastly hue wherever it fell. Three chairs, the one unoccupied, a small library table, the filled book shelves which lined the wall—all were green. Doctor Ruhskin himself was a wrinkled, green mummy, while Inspector Craighead was a livid, green Sphinx, chewing perpetually on an unlit, green cigar. The Sphinx nodded its head thoughtfully as the green light was switched off and the mellow reading light again took its place.

"There is a green reflector on Milford's desk lamp," he mused. "That might account for the greenish appearance of the hand, if there was a hand. Milford may have seen an illusion, brought on by fright, or perhaps a projection from a miniature cinematograph carried by the actual thief for the purpose of diverting suspicion and lending an air of mystery to the robbery."

"Milford did not see an illusion," declared Doctor Rushkin. "He saw a hand. Illusions do not have warts. And how could a cinematographic hand lift the package from the desk? Who, or what, opened the cage door? What power directed that package in its journey through the air? What was it that drove the driverless automobile?"

"My theory is that some form of magnetism, or radio-activity, or both, was used. I understand that such things are not impossible. If airships can be guided by this force, so can automobiles. The entire case points toward a criminal possessed of re-

markable scientific knowledge. So I have come to you for help."

"Your theory is wrong. It is not impossible—very few things are actually impossible to science, but it is decidedly impracticable. I tell you"—Doctor Rushkin had risen from the chair and was pacing the floor nervously—"it was the hand that did it, the green hand. Man, do you think I don't know that warty forefinger? I tell you the hand that lifted the package from the desk clutched the wheel of that car when it dashed away."

"But I saw no hand," objected Inspector Craighead. "I swear that nothing touched the wheel."

"Of course not. How could you see that which is——" Doctor Rushkin bit off his words with the abruptness of one who has said more than he intended.

For a long moment the little room was quiet, so quiet that the sudden ringing of the doorbell came like the pandemoniac clang of a fire-engine in the dead of night. The shuffling step of the Chinese cook and man-of-all-work sounded in the hall. The street door opened. An argument ensued, in which the high-pitched tones of the cook's pidgin-English profanity at length succumbed to the shrill and lurid vernacular of a street gamin. Presently the shuffling step came back, accompanied by a lighter footfall. A tap sounded at the study door.

"Doctor Lushkin, boy him say must see," squeaked the cook.

Doctor Rushkin threw open the door. A newsboy stood at the threshold, clutching in one hand a sealed and soiled envelope, evidently prepared to frustrate any attempt of the malevolent Chinaman to separate it from his grasp.

"You Doc Rushkin?" he inquired belligerently.

"I am," responded Doctor Rushkin.

"Doc Rushkin hisself?"

"Doctor Rushkin himself," repeated the doctor, smiling.

The newsboy thrust out the soiled envelope hastily.

"Dis here letter," he quavered in his shrill treble, "dis here letter jist dropped on my newsstand out'n de air, all wrapped around a silver dollar, and som'p'n says: 'Take dat to Doc Rushkin, an' don't yer give it to no one else.' Honest, Doc, dey wasn't no man er nuttin' dere, jist—jist a voice."

Doctor Rushkin ripped open the envelope and glanced at the enclosure, a sheet of folded note paper, which he passed quietly to Inspector Craighead.

The scrawled message, almost illegible, as if written in great haste, or fright, or both, ran thus:

"To-night. Midnight. The green light. For God's sake!"

It was unsigned.

An ornamental little clock on the library table tinkled warningly. It lacked half an hour of being midnight. Doctor Rushkin turned upon the newsboy.

"When did you get this letter?" he demanded.

"'Bout t'ree hours ago," whimpered the boy, scenting trouble. "I couldn't find nobody to mind my stand, er I'd 'a' brung it to yuh sooner. Honest I would."

"Have you shown it to any one else, or told any one about it?"

The newsboy shook his head vigorously.

"I was scared to," he confessed.

"Good," commented the doctor, drawing a twenty-dollar bill from his pocket. "How long do you suppose this would keep you scared?"

"Gee, doc"—the newsie opened wide eyes—"fer dat much I could be scared to deat' fer de rest of me life!"

"Fair enough," agreed Doctor Rushkin, smiling. "A good bargain. Now run along home with you."

"T'anks, doc!"

Having achieved what he believed to be a bow, the newsboy scampered away, an animated bundle of rags and elation. Doctor Rushkin turned to the Chinaman.

"Leave the street door unlatched, John," he ordered. "I am expecting another visitor in a few minutes. He will let himself in, so there is no use of you waiting up."

The Chinaman shuffled away to his own quarters, and again the two friends were left alone in the study.

Inspector Craighead's impassivity had not been ruffled by the interruption. He shifted his cigar and waited. Doctor Rushkin presently broke the silence with a question:

"Craighead, how much is the solution of this mystery worth to you?"

"Thirty thousand dollars," responded the inspector dryly.

"I take it, then, that if you succeed in recovering the money, you can find means to keep secret anything you may see or hear to-night."

"You can trust me to do that," returned Inspector Craighead, "whether the money is recovered or not."

"Then," said Doctor Rushkin, with a glance at the clock, "in just twenty-five minutes you shall see and hear several things which you will never forget. You shall see the green transparent hand which young Milford saw in the cage, the hand which clutched the wheel of the car when it leaped away, apparently empty, before your very eyes; the hand that wrote the note you have just read. And you shall see something else, more horrible than you suspect."

"If there was a hand on that wheel, why couldn't I see it, as Milford did in the cage?" persisted the inspector.

For answer Doctor Rushkin stretched out a long arm until his hand rested on the shelf of a bookcase. He went through the motion of picking up an apparently heavy object of small dimensions, holding it out as a teacher might offer an imaginary apple for the instruction of a small pupil.

"Do you see anything in my hand?" he demanded.

Inspector Craighead answered in the negative.

"Does that prove that there is nothing there?"

The inspector pondered this question for a moment.

"No," he decided. "I cannot see the air in this room, yet I know that it is here."

"Aside from purely physiological reasons, how could you detect the presence of air?"

"By weight."

"Precisely. Now, hold out your hand."

Inspector Craighead complied. He felt a weighty object dropped into his palm. With a growing sense of astonishment he brought the hand close to his eyes, but could see nothing. The contours of the object were plainly perceptible to the sense of touch. The weight was unmistakable. Yet the object itself was absolutely invisible, without even the refraction of light which might be expected from a lump of clear glass.

"What is it?" challenged Doctor Rushkin.

"I should judge that it is an exceptionally fine piece of glass," the inspector hazarded.

"In that case your judgment would be at fault. You hold in your hand a piece of steel, an ordinary piece of steel treated by a special process of my own invention, a process upon which I have been working for twenty-five years, and which lacks but one thing to make it perfect. That is why I desire your secrecy. Until I perfect my process it must be kept secret. And that," Doctor Rushkin concluded wistfully, "may be never, for I am an old, old man."

Inspector Craighead's cigar twitched spasmodically. His fingers closed on the invisible bit of steel.

"Steel! Invisible steel!" he exclaimed. "Is it possible? Man, that means invisible battleships, mounted with invisible guns, loaded with invisible ammunition, equipped with invisible——"

Doctor Rushkin answered his inquiring glance with a grim nod.

"The process is not confined to steel alone," he said. "It is applicable to any mineral or fabric. Chemically, it is harmless and practically inactive, has no affinity for any known element, and therefore will not corrode metals or destroy tissues, either animal or vegetable."

"That means an invisible fleet!" Inspector Craighead was becoming enthusiastic. "Man, we would hold the navies of the world in the hollow of our hand—but for one thing."

"And that?"

"Invisible crews to man the fleet."

Doctor Rushkin arose and swung back a section of bookcase from the wall. From a recess behind this he brought an ordinary birdcage, containing the usual provisions

for food and water, although no bird was to be seen. He held the cage up to the light. There was a sleepy, plaintive twitter, then a louder, merrier chirp, and a moment later the blithe, full-throated song of a canary burst from the depths of the apparently empty cage.

Inspector Craighead shifted his unlit cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other. It was his way of showing great excitement.

"An invisible bird!" he breathed almost reverently. "And you say your invention is not perfect. What more can you want?"

"The process has an Achilles heel." Doctor Rushkin had again assumed the attitude of the teacher to the scholar. "A thing is said to be invisible, you understand, when light rays pass through it without affecting the retina. But there are many kinds of light rays, each with its own peculiarity. Thus many solids which are visible in the light of my reading lamp become invisible under the Roentgen ray and conversely. The same is true of other rays. Let me illustrate."

He arranged the birdcage and the invisible piece of steel on the one chair in the room which had remained vacant throughout the evening. Above this chair, suspended from the ceiling, was an electric light fixture with bulb and reflector of deep green. The turn of a switch set the chair and its contents in a conical shaft of intense green light. By its rays the piece of steel became visible, vague, transparent, but still visible. The songbird in the cage sprang into view, a shadow of a bird, through which the bars of its cage could plainly be seen, yet undoubtedly a live, quivering, breathing thing.

"That," said Doctor Rushkin, "is the weak point. Under the green light objects which have been treated with the process can still be seen vaguely, as Milford saw that hand in his cage when it came directly under the greenish reflection from his desk lamp."

Inspector Craighead's cigar described an arc.

"Then it was a hand," he said. "And you told me you had reasons to believe that two such hands exist. Will you let me have those reasons now?"

Slowly, like a man who suddenly felt the weight of his seventy years, Doctor Rushkin replaced the birdcage in its hiding-place, swung back the section of bookcase and placed the bit of invisible steel upon its shelf. He glanced at the little clock, whose hands pointed to one minute of twelve. Then he snapped out the light. Except for the green light streaming upon the one vacant chair the room was in darkness.

"Two hands," he answered, "and a body. Those hands, Craighead, belong to a man, an invisible man, who entered the cage with Milford, carried out the package and drove away in the car which you swore to be unoccupied. The hand with the warty forefinger is that of my laboratory assistant, Raymer. He disappeared a week ago, and with him a small phial of the fluid with which I rendered the canary invisible. His father was a great criminal. He himself had ambitions to become a greater one. So he learned a little of my secret—too little, I fear, for his own good. By its aid he proposed to become the greatest criminal on earth, an invisible monster who could commit any crime and defy capture. I do not think he will succeed. But he will be here in one minute, and we shall see."

The little clock on the table struck twelve. From somewhere outside came the cough of an automobile. The street door slammed. Footsteps sounded in the hall. The study door opened, closed.

"Doctor Rushkin," a hoarse whisper sounded, "are you there? My God, doctor, are you there?"

"The chair, Raymer, under the green light," was the answer.

A shadow seemed to flit uncertainly for a moment at the edge of the green cone. Then it fairly leaped forward and came to rest in the chair. It was breathing in short, audible gasps. Its eyes, large, round, horror-stricken, rolled wildly. Its chest heaved. Its features writhed. It was a ghastly, ghostly, grotesque, fear-ridden thing.

For God's sake, Doctor Rushkin"—it was like the ghost of a voice, Raymer's whisper —"is there nothing to counteract this

damnable stuff? Won't it wear off? Been this way twenty-four hours now. It's—ugh—horrible!" He held out a hand, the hand with the warty forefinger, and shuddered at its transparency. "Horrible!" he repeated. "It's horrible to look at other people and know they can't see you; can't even see yourself; can't talk to people; can't go into a restaurant and eat a meal; can't do anything, or buy anything, or be anything. It's driving me crazy. For the love of God, doctor, tell me what to—what to do—what to take!"

"There is no counteragent," said Doctor Rushkin slowly. "No power on earth can neutralize the effect of the process. Raymer, you are doomed to a lifetime of invisibility. You are a ghost among men, and yet mortal. Being mortal, you must have food, shelter and clothing; yet money will not buy them, for who will deal with a ghost? You will want companionship; people will shrink from you in horror. Only when the green light falls upon you, Raymer, will they see what we see now—the ghastly, green, transparent shadow of the most miserable man on earth."

A low, moaning sob came from the shadowy figure in the chair. Then swiftly it leaped from the green cone and was gone. The study door opened and shut violently. The street door slammed. From somewhere outside came the roar of a high-powered motor, diminishing as a black touring car, lightless and apparently driverless, rushed into the night.

Inspector Craighead, following the trail in the early light of the next morning, found the car. It lay, a twisted mass of wreckage, at the bottom of an old stone quarry on the outskirts of the city, where it had plunged from a hazardous bend in the road above.

The package of stolen currency, still intact, was among the ruins. He saw no body, and had no wish to probe the depths of the slimy, stagnant pool in which the wreck was partially submerged. Always there is an odor of dead things about the place.

Buzzards frequently circle there, and if they found an added attraction during the next few days it was a matter not to be greatly wondered at.

NO JAIL CAN HOLD HIM

MAKING good his boast that no prison could hold him, John Mohr, alias "Muller" and "Moore," escaped from Sing Sing Prison early the other morning. As on previous occasions, he succeeded in getting out by sawing iron bars.

Mohr acted as orderly in the prison hospital, where he was last seen by the patients. When the prisoners were counted, he was gone. He had sawed his way through the window of the hospital bathroom.

His absence was not promptly discovered because he had sawed a single iron bar at the top and replaced it on going out.

From the bathroom window Mohr, the prison's officials say, jumped to the roof of an adjoining building and then to a lower one. He was then sixteen feet from the ground, to which he jumped. Then he scaled the iron picket fence on the Hudson river side. That no guard saw Mohr climb over the fence led to the belief that he might be a stowaway, a theory that was soon abandoned.

The only record of Mohr's previous crimes on file at Sing Sing is that which is on the Bertillon card giving his measurements. It shows that he was sentenced by Judge Humphreys of Queens County, to serve from two years and six months to four years on a charge of carrying concealed weapons, as a second offender. He had served about one and a half years.

Officers of the prison and inmates who claimed to know something of Mohr's record said that he had sawed his way out of the Queens County Jail and out of the prison at Comstock.

A Year of Trouble

IN Paris they have a woman seeress known as Madame de Theleme, who issues an almanac every year, in which she sets forth her predictions of coming national events. Her power to peer into the future is uncanny. She has frequently given proof of the unerring accuracy of her prognostications, and the French people have come to look upon her as a marvel. Astrologers and necromancers have infested the earth from time immemorial, showing a modicum of success in their predictions, but most frequently the cataclysms they foretell fail to materialize. This does not hold good with the French prophetess. It is not generally known by what form of reasoning or deductions she procures her advance information of events, but whatever the system, it usually gives the expected results. Indeed the vogue of this woman has become so great that her almanac setting forth her hypotheses for a year in advance finds an extensive and rapid sale. The strong outbursts of superstition in France is due to post-war influences.

According to current reports, the lady has anticipated the newspapers by foretelling much what they would otherwise publish when the event occurs. According to her theory the outlook for the present year 1923 is not very promising, as it is to encompass a great many disasters in American and a number of political upheavals in Europe. During the months of January and February the temperate zone is to be visited by severe winter weather; in fact, she goes so far as to say that blizzards will sweep the latitudes which were formerly immune to such weather. The north of Europe and many parts of North America will probably be devastated by tremendous storms, wind, rain and sleet.

These storms are expected to sweep out upon the Atlantic, increasing the dangers of navigation. Madame de Theleme foresees danger for two great American cities, which are likely to be seriously damaged by a tornado in the Middle West. Unluckily the madame does not mention the names of the cities, so that the inhabitants might dodge into their cyclone cellars to avoid the cataclysms. Extensive floods are to predominate in the month of April in this country, in Russia, and in southeastern Europe; as though that were not enough to frighten us to death, she says that from June to August there will be terrible earthquakes in the Orient and Central America, where such things are quite common. Luckily there are no threats for these shocks to occur in the U. S. She expects us to have bumper crops, for although the heat here from July to September will be very great, there will be enough rain to insure a big harvest.

Now for the death roll. Assassins are going to kill four statesmen—one an American and three Europeans. It is predicted that the star of an unknown statesman will rise in England until he reaches a dominant position in world politics. Among the warring factions his accession may lead in May or June to disaster. The seeress foresees another world-wide war, but says it will be nipped in the bud by a neutral power, by which she probably means U. S. A. Another expectation of the madame is that three great nations are going to join the prohibition ranks, but she positively states that all those countries that are now enjoying prohibition will remain dry throughout the year. The international relations of southern European countries are going to be seriously endangered by a revolution late in the year.

Another king is going to lose his throne. The prophetess does not say to which coun-

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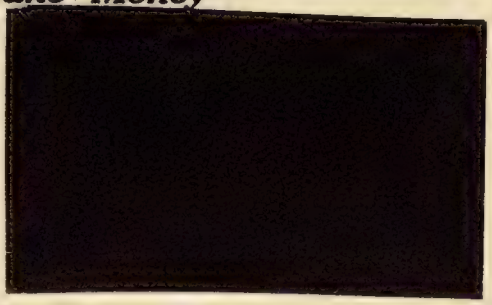

try he is likely to emigrate, but it is probable we will have a king in our midst about a year from Thanksgiving Day. Germany gets a pretty hard knock from the madame, as she cannot see anything but all sorts of difficulties for that country. She also says that the financial affairs of the Allies are not going to be solved just now, and that there will be another campaign to resurrect the League of Nations, in order to drag in those nations which at present are in no favor of that combination.

STRIP STORE OF GOODS

THIEVES early the other morning stripped the clothing store at 1009 East 163d street, New York, known as the Hunt's Point Clothing Shop, of nearly every article of clothing in the store except what was used for window display purposes, and escaped with their loot in two auto trucks after being chased for almost a mile by detectives in a taxicab.

The robbery was discovered at 2 o'clock by Larry Williams, a special policeman in the employ of the Schult Night Patrol, who was on duty in East 163d street. One of the stores he was guarding was the clothing shop. He tried the door on his rounds and found it open. As he stepped inside to investigate a heavy overcoat was thrown over his head and he was seized by two men, who dragged him to the rear of the store and tied his hands and legs and threw him in a corner on the floor.

He heard the men talking and believes from their voices there were four robbers in the store. They attempted to open a safe, but failed, and then started to remove the stock. They had placed a ladder against the rear window and had cut the wires of the burglar alarm system. The clothing was taken out the rear and handed to confederates, who loaded it on the trucks parked outside near the store.

When Williams heard the thieves leaving he struggled from his bonds and ran to a near-by restaurant, where he telephoned the Simpson street police station and notified them of the robbery. He then jumped into a taxi and gave chase to the trucks, which speeded south on Simpson street. Williams was joined by detectives. The pursuers were able to keep track of the fugitives by means of articles of clothing which dropped from the laden trucks. At Southern Boulevard and 156th street the trail was lost. A general alarm was sent out to watch for the trucks.

The owners of the store, David Mondell and Max Schubach, estimated their loss at $30,000.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mystery [redacted]
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by C. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by H. Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by E. Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thomas J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Anderson.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. F. Oursler.
77 "The Little White Room," by Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by W. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "The Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89 "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. F. Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Bechdolt.
95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Lost Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "The Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by G. Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
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111 "Trapping the Jewel Smugglers," by B. Poynter.
112 "The Missing Evidence," by Harold F. Podhaski.
113 "A Clue by Radio," by Capt. Jack Static.
114 "The District Attorney's Secret," by C. Oursler.
115 "A Man From Headquarters," by H. Craigie.
116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by D. G. McDonald.
118 "Number Nine Queer Street," by Jack Bechdolt.
119 "Trailed by a Private Detective," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
120 "The Mouse Trap," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
121 "A Radio Mystery," by Capt. Jack Static
122 "The Clawing Death," by Beulah Poynter.
123 "A Master of Millions," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
124 "The Secret of Room 13," by Hamilton Craigie.

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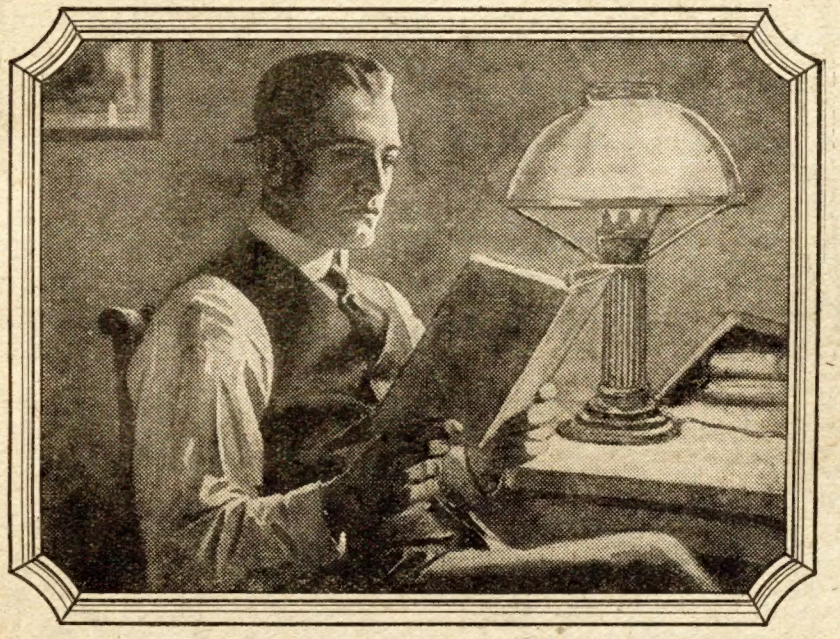

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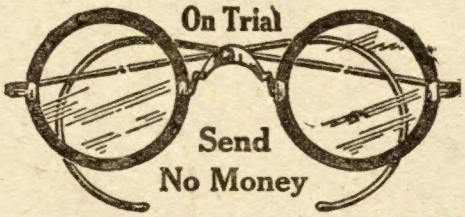

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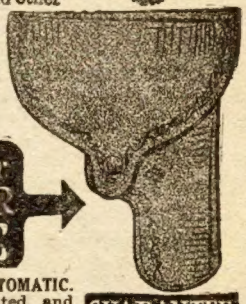

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